"MY DEAR CHILD"

LETTERS FROM M. K. GANDHI TO ESTHER FAERING

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A walk with Bapuji in the early morning

"MY DEAR CHILD"

LETTERS FROM M. K. GANDHI TO ESTHER FAERING

Foreword
by
DR. D. S. RAMACHANDRA RAO

Edited
by
ALICE M. BARNES

NAVAJIVAN PUBLISHING HOUSE
AHMEDABAD

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Dedicated to my two daughters
Nan and Tangai,
as their great heritage
from India

PREFACE

These letters written by Bapuji to me are very precious and sacred, in fact they are the only heirloom I possess, and it is with some reluctance that I publish them. Yet I feel it is my duty as well as privilege to share them not only with Bapuji's countrymen, but with all his numberless friends in other lands, so that they may get a first-hand impression of Bapuji's real nature and personality.

His love for the individual, his great affection for and understanding of little children, his deeply religious mind, all are revealed in these letters.

So, by sending this little book out into the world, we hope and pray that the reader may get to know Bapuji better, and little by little recapture at least in part his wonderful spirit of service and love.

I acknowledge my gratitude to my friend Alice M. Barnes for having arranged these letters after a careful study of them. She has also given a heading to each letter, so as to make it easier to understand the main thought in it, and has added footnotes to enable the reader to follow the events and identify the different persons mentioned in the letters. I can say that without her work these letters would never have been published ; but her labour of love will be justified if the letters are appreciated both in M. K. Gandhi's own country and in others.

Kotagiri, Nilgiris, 1951.

Esther Menon, nee Faering

FOREWORD

It was in June 1951 that I first met Shrimati Esther Menon, at Kotagiri, in the Nilgiri Hills. In the course of our first conversation, we discovered that the subject that most interested us both was Gandhiji and his approach to national and international problems. A few days later, as we were returning from a meeting, we could not help talking of him again, and it was then that she told me of the existence of the letters contained in this book. "Do you know" she said, with some hesitation, as though wondering whether she could really trust me, "Bapu was fond of me ; he used to treat me as a daughter ; for several years he wrote to me frequently. I still possess his letters ; they are precious to me." Naturally I was greatly interested to meet one who had thus been honoured with so intimate a friendship with Gandhiji. "It was wonderful," she continued, "how he could spare the time to write so often to me, an ordinary woman, while he had the burden of the country on his shoulders. I often think of this and marvel. I cannot understand why he was so kind and good to me." Then, as we approached her doorstep she asked me, "Would you like to read the letters ?" I assured her that I should deem it an honour indeed to have the privilege of reading them, and she promised to have them ready for me in a day or two. When I called on her a few days later, she handed me the bundle of letters, obviously far too many to read there and then.

Most generously she assured me that she was willing for me to take these precious letters away with me to read at leisure. How proud I felt to have a bundle of Gandhiji's letters in my pocket!

It was no easy matter to read them, I found; some of them were barely legible, for the ink had faded with the lapse of time; others needed very delicate handling, for the paper, mostly hand-made, had grown fragile in the extreme; not a few were scribbled in pencil at wayside stations while Gandhiji waited for a train, late at night, or at some unearthly morning hour when ordinary people were still in bed. Others were still easy enough to read, and a few even were typewritten. I was thrilled and moved by them all.

On the third day I called at Mrs. Menon's house and deposited the bundle on her table. "Well, what do you think of them?" she queried. "You have indeed a treasure in them," I replied. "But now you should not keep them all to yourself; you should share them with others. In this country, and perhaps even more in the West, there are very many who would be greatly helped by knowing them."

An incident in my own experience had led me to this conclusion. At the Inauguration Ceremony of the Constituent Assembly of Mysore, the Chief Minister asked me to speak briefly on Gandhiji's contribution to the attainment of freedom by India. The request took me by surprise; there was no time for elaborate preparation, and therefore I gave utterance to what was uppermost in my mind at the time — my heartfelt gratitude to Gandhiji for the wonderful part he had played in making me and my fellow countrymen free, and in achieving this in a way which had no

parallel in history. An Englishman who heard me speak, sought me out later, and to my surprise said, "You have given us a new aspect of Gandhiji's life. I never knew that he was a spiritually-minded man. We all knew, of course, that he was a clever politician, an advocate of the spinning wheel, of cottage industries and of Harijan uplift, but we never heard of his spiritual greatness and of his complete dependence on God for inspiration and power. I now see that he was more than a statesman — he must have been a saint of a very high order." "A saint he was indeed," I replied. "It was because of his saintliness, his entire dependence on God, that he was able to achieve his aims, and to achieve them by the non-violent ways in which he so heartily believed." I could see that the respect of this Westerner for Gandhiji was deepened and his heart touched when he came to understand something of the spiritual basis of Gandhiji's life and work.

Gandhiji did not fit into any theological system, but God was a stupendous reality to him; he relied on God to the uttermost, and therefore was able to become the channel through which God's power flowed and his purpose was accomplished.

These one hundred and twenty-nine letters, written by Gandhiji to a European lady, and dealing with personal, domestic, national and international problems, give us insight into the spiritual aspect of his life. Having adopted her as his "daughter", he finds time to write these affectionate letters to her, letters in which his own wonderful personality is revealed, scintillating with humour, goodwill and generosity, and in which above all, it is abundantly clear that faith in God was the foundation on which he built his own

life work, the one unshakable foundation for the lives of all men and of all nations. "We do not know God's hidden ways," he writes at a time when his "daughter" was facing great trials and difficulties; "if only we submit to Him, He makes us do many things, even unconsciously to ourselves. It will be such a joy to me if you will never find yourself in the valley of despair, for to be there even for one moment means lack of faith in a living God." And again, "Remember that God takes the burden of all our cares on His broad shoulders, if we will but let Him. This is as true as it is true that I am writing to you. Only His way is not our way, His shoulders are not like ours. But there is all the beauty." These two passages seem to me to sum up Gandhiji's deep faith and reveal the secret of his triumphant life.

During the later years of Gandhiji's life, prayer assumed for him ever-increasing significance. The unsympathetic attitude of the British Government towards Indian aspirations for political independence, the inertia of the masses, the lack of sustained faith in his non-violent methods on the part of many of his friends and supporters, often drove him almost to the verge of despair. He would, in such times of dire need turn to God for help and direction. Group prayer, also, the reading of verses from the sacred books, the singing of Bhajans, became a regular feature of the life of his Ashram. I can never forget what a thrilling experience it was to join in the evening prayers at the Ashram at Wardha in 1942. It seemed as though a heavenly vision was granted to him while he prayed, and his fervour communicated itself to the other worshippers.

The recognition, among us Indians, of Gandhiji's intense spiritual power earned for him the title of Mahatma. Though this was repugnant to him, he endured it, for he knew that we, as a nation, are prone to hero-worship. No doubt we have had other Mahatmas in this ancient land of ours, but so far as we know, Gandhiji is the only Mahatma who has attempted to purify national and international politics. Knowing human nature as he did, he realized that merely human resources are inadequate to bear the strain of modern political life, seething as it often is with suspicion, ill-will, fear and envy. He threw himself at the feet of God and drew from Him the power and wisdom to fulfil his mission.

Gandhiji believed in the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, and therefore had unshakable faith in the power of "Satyagraha" and non-violence. This faith evoked a sympathetic response in the hearts of men of good-will the world over. When the freedom of India was won by non-violent means, it was recognized throughout the world as a unique victory both for Gandhiji personally and for the methods of "Satyagraha". Christendom had always worshipped Jesus Christ as the Prince of Peace, but it had discarded his principle of Love as unworkable in the affairs of this world. Now Gandhiji had taken up the challenge of Christ's message of Peace, and in his own way proved to an incredulous world that the principle of non-violence could be put into triumphant practice in the field of political relations.

When Gandhiji died, India went into mourning, and the whole world shared India's sorrow. Gandhi, the apostle of love and truth met his death at the hands

of an assassin as he entered the place of worship, but God had spared him long enough to witness to all men that love is more potent than hate and that truth outlasts falsehood.

The letters in this book, written mostly in the years 1917 to 1932, give us fresh insight into the motives and aspirations of " Bapu ", while he was yet in his own way experimenting with truth and non-violence, and was himself being transformed by his faith in the God of Truth and Peace into a " Mahatma ".

I am grateful to Shrimati Esther Menon for the honour she has done me by asking me to write the Foreword to these letters. I commend them to all who care for truth and peace, and more especially to the many in Western countries to whom they will be a reminder of the Great Nazarene whom they profess to love, adore and follow.

Madras, January, 1952 D. S. Ramachandra Rao

INTRODUCTION

Many of these letters written by Gandhiji, and now given to the world by their recipient, Esther Menon, speak for themselves, but it will increase both their interest and their value to readers if a certain amount of background knowledge is here given.

In 1916, a young Dane, Esther Faering, came to South India as a member of the staff of the Danish Missionary Society. Not long after her arrival, and while still studying Tamil and improving her already excellent English, she came to live with me in Madras, and thus began a friendship which has ripened with the years, and which has now led her to honour me with the task of introducing these letters to what we hope will be a wide and international circle.

It was intended that Esther Faering, who had high educational qualifications, should undertake educational work for girls under the auspices of the Danish Mission. As part of her preparation for this work, the Mission authorities wisely and generously enabled her and Miss Anne Marie Petersen, an older member of the Mission staff, to visit a number of outstanding educational institutions in India, both Christian and non-Christian, where particularly interesting experiments were being tried, or particularly successful methods were in use. These were the days when Gandhiji, recently returned from South Africa to devote the rest of his life to his native land, had

established his Ashram at Sabarmati near Ahmedabad, and begun to gather round him a group of men and women prepared to help work out his ideals of truth and love in the life of a community. It was inevitable that Miss Petersen and Esther Faering, whose hopes for their future educational work so closely resembled Gandhiji's, and who, furthermore, were already dissatisfied with the foreignness of the education in vogue in India, should put Sabarmati on the list of institutions which they must visit during their tour.

The first letter in this collection is a postcard from Gandhiji in reply to Esther Faering's letter of thanks written immediately after their visit to Sabarmati. The few days spent at the Ashram were enough to convince both Esther and Anne Marie Petersen that the school which they were to conduct in South India must be a "national" school, on the pattern of that at Sabarmati, with its emphasis on simplicity of life, on the dignity of all labour, on the need for every member to take a fair share in the work of the community, and on Indian culture, rather than one conforming to the conventional and "denationalized" lines of most Government and Christian Mission schools at that time.

During these few days at Sabarmati there was also born a mutual affection which quickly grew into the deep and beautiful "father-daughter" relationship between Gandhiji and Esther Faering revealed in these letters. In later years he wrote, "Of course Esther has been more to me than a begotten daughter, for she is it by choice and right of love."

People who were in India during the years 1917 onwards to at least 1935, know that it was a somewhat dangerous thing for any foreigner to be known

as an intimate friend of Gandhiji. More especially during the first World War and in the years immediately following, the British Government in India was nervous of his growing influence, and afraid of "revolution" in the country. Nationals of all non-British countries resident in India were closely watched, lest they should be agents of the German Government, or foster the Indian nationalist movement; anyone interested even in labour unions was deeply suspected; and all missionary societies except those whose headquarters were in Britain had to give a solemn assurance of loyalty to the British Government and a promise of strict non-interference in Indian politics on behalf of all their missionaries. The breach of such a promise by any one member of their mission staff might easily have led to the expulsion from India of the whole mission.

It was therefore a matter of real embarrassment to the Danish Mission authorities in South India and in Denmark that one of their young missionaries should have become personally attached to "Mr. Gandhi", and for a time Esther Faering was forbidden to revisit Sabarmati, or even to correspond with Gandhiji. Several of the letters in this book refer to this conflict between her and her Mission, and are a revelation of Gandhiji's wisdom and patience, his power of appreciating other people's point of view, and his faith in the ultimate triumph of sanity and right. To this girl who by nature was inclined to precipitate action his often repeated counsel is to wait and be patient, to be loyal and submissive to her Missionary society, to the utmost limits of conscience, and to seek always the good guidance of God.

Meanwhile Miss Petersen ceased to be a member of the Danish Mission, as it had become very clear that such an Ashram-School as she and Esther Faering visualized could not be established within the framework of any organized mission, the temper of the times being what it was. With her senior colleague, Esther Faering also resigned her connection with the Danish Mission, many of whose members had been, and still were, consistently patient and kind with one who must indeed have been something of a thorn in the flesh to "normal" missionaries in those difficult days. Her resignation freed Esther to return at last to Sabarmati and become an inmate of the Ashram. The tender concern of "Bapu" (father) for this new young member of the community, handicapped to some extent by being a foreigner, and immature in her spiritual life, as he so clearly saw, is shown in the long series of letters, written whenever his work took him away from Sabarmati. Unfortunately Esther Faering's health did not stand the strain of the somewhat rigorous regime in the Ashram; after some time she returned to South India, and made preparations for going home to Denmark. Her betrothal to a young Indian doctor, though it brought her much joy, was also the occasion of intense suffering because of the misunderstanding, harsh judgments and even hostility of many who had previously been her friends. Bapuji's wise and understanding letters at this time were of the utmost comfort.

After some time in Europe, Esther Menon and her husband were able to return to India, and spent the next few years helping Anne Marie Petersen with the school and Ashram. It was an uphill task for all, for with the ever-increasing tension between

Indian national aspirations and the British Government, any educational institution run on "National" lines could not but be suspect to Government officials and the missionary community alike. How distant and almost unreal the difficulties of those years seem now in these happier days of Indian Independence! But they were very real to brave pioneers such as Anne Marie Petersen and her young colleagues Esther and E. K. Menon on the one hand, and to long-suffering and nervous officials on the other.

After the birth of their second daughter, the Menons went to England, and for about eight years were at Selly Oak, near Birmingham, sharing in the rich and varied international life of which Woodbrooke, the Quaker Centre, is the focal point. It was here that Bapuji met once again his "dear child", and enjoyed the companionship of the two little girls, Nan and Tangai, when he visited England for the Round Table Conference.

On his return to India, Gandhiji was arrested and for two years was detained in the Central Jail, Yeravda, Poona; but his kindly letters did not fail. The children, too, had their share of gay little notes from their devoted "grandfather", and were by now old enough to write to him in return.

When the Menons returned to India they had to face the pain of a divided family life; for the sake of the little girls, rather delicate, and quite unused to the heat of the South Indian plains after eight years in Denmark and England, Esther had to live in Kodaikanal in the Palni Hills. It will be noticed how sensitively Gandhiji sympathized with the problems arising from this situation, and how sensible and practical was all his advice.

The letters in this little book will hardly be fully appreciated except by those who already know, or will now acquaint themselves with, the life of Gandhiji, and can therefore realize something of its amazing fulness. The establishment and constant guidance of the community life at the Sabarmati Ashram; the months of patient investigation of the conditions of life and work among the indigo labourers; the years of devoted toil for the removal of the curse of untouchability and the granting of political, social and religious liberty to the outcaste millions in India; crusade after crusade against one or another social evils; constant propaganda for the spinning wheel; mountains of correspondence; streams of visitors; above all the long, painful, unremitting toil for the political and economic independence of his country, involving periods in jail, times of participation in the councils of the British rulers, fasts undertaken as the only way of completely sharing in the sufferings of the oppressed or in order to render himself a purer, finer instrument in the hand of God — the list of the activities of this truly amazing man could be indefinitely prolonged. And yet, in a life so crowded with multitudinous business of national and international importance, Gandhiji never forgot the value of the individual. Of this fact the letters in this book are a convincing and moving proof. They are proof too, if proof be needed, of the fine sensitiveness and generosity of his spirit; there is no attempt to influence the "child" to whom he writes, against the foreign rulers of India, no self-glorification or self-pity, no bitterness or rancour. On the other hand there is, as Dr. Ramachandra Rao has pointed out in his Foreword, a revelation of the motive springs of the whole

of Bapuji's life and work, his complete devotion to Truth and Love, his utter surrender to the Will of God.

Alice M. Barnes

Note : It will be noticed that many of the editor's explanatory footnotes are mainly for the benefit of foreigners to whom Indian conditions and personalities are not well known. Readers who find them superfluous are asked to bear this in mind.

CONTENTS

TO THE CHILDREN

"MY DEAR CHILD"

[Letters from M. K. Gandhi to Esther Faering]

1

"MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY"

Dear Esther,

I was delighted to have your note from Bombay. I assure you that we miss you both very much. You were hardly guests to us ; you had become members of the family. Hope Miss Petersen is quite herself again. I redirected a batch of letters yesterday and am doing likewise today.

With regards to both of you,

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

Ahmedabad,
11-1-1917

2

"PEACE IN THE ASHRAM"

Ahmedabad,
15th January 1917

Dear Esther,

I was pleased to receive your nice letter and hear that Miss Petersen had thrown off her cold entirely.

I am glad you found peace in the Ashram. Yes, both of you we regard as members of the family. You will come whenever you wish to and can.

Ramdas * is a noble boy. He is the one going to South Africa. I feel sure that he will give a good account of himself there. By way of preparation he has been attending a printing press here, practising at the compositor's desk.

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* One of Gandhiji's sons.

I have learnt enough of you to know that you will put your whole heart into your studies and soon be talking enough Tamil for your purpose.

Pray keep the rules * as long as you like. There is no occasion to hurry over sendng them.

With kind regards,

Yours,
M. K. Gandhi

3

THOUGHT FOR THE POLAKS' WELFARE

Ahmedabad,
20th March 1917

Dear Esther,

I have an English lady friend and her sister's children who during the hot weather are to live at some hillside place. You are going to some such place. Could you befriend them if they went to the same station as you? Of course they will bear their own expenses. The thing wanted is good companionship. And I thought of you. If you will befriend them, will you please tell me where you would go, when you would leave, where you would stay and whether they could reside and board at the same place as you will. You will also please give me an idea of the expenses there. You have heard of Mr. Polak. The friend is his sister-in-law. While Mr. and Mrs. Polak travel on public business, they are anxious to locate their children in some hillside place where Mr. Polak's sister-in-law could find suitable company. She is a stranger to India.

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* Rules drawn up for the members of the Ashram at Sabarmati.

With much love from us all,

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

The Polaks leave Ahmedabad probably on Monday. I would like you please therefore to wire to me.

If you will address

Gandhi
Ahmedabad
the wire will reach me.

M. K. G.

4

THOUGHT FOR THE POLAKS' WELFARE

Ahmedabad,
31st March 1917

Dear Esther,

I am putting you to a lot of trouble on behalf of Mrs. Polak's sister. But you have chosen the privilege of letting me be your brother. And I have the credit for being most exacting of those who are nearest and dearest to me. Having made the choice, you must be content to suffer.

Miss Graham, that is the sister's name, may be able at once to go to Ooty. It is necessary for her and young Polak to be on a hillside without delay. I much fear that I shall not be able to go to Madras in April. If I am able to do so at all this year, it will be after your descent from the hills.

With love to you and Miss Petersen from us all,

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

5

"BAPU"

Motihari,
Champaran,
15th April 1917

Dear Esther,

Your sweet letter has followed me all the way here. I am almost at the base of the Himalayas. I am studying the condition of the people working under the indigo planters. My work is most difficult. My trust is in God. We can but work and then be careful for nothing.

Pray do not worry about Miss Graham. She has been fixed up at Ooty.

You may address me as Bapu if you like. It means father. In the Ashram it has become a term of endearment. I value your affection very much indeed. You may continue to use the Ahmedabad address.

With love,

Yours sincerely,
M. K. G.

6

"I AM ABOUT TO BE IMPRISONED"

Motihari,
17th April 1917

My dear Esther,

I know you will want me to tell you that I am about to be imprisoned. I have come here to remove some labour grievances. The authorities do not want me. Hence the impending imprisonment. Do ask Mr. M. at the Ashram to send you some papers, and

you will know. I am absolutely joyed to think that I shall be imprisoned for the sake of conscience.

Yours,
(if you want me to sign)
Bapu

7
"YOU CAN BUT PRAY"

Motihari,
Champaran,
2nd May 1917

Dear Esther,

I have just received your letter from Ahmedabad. To say 'I thank you' would be in your case an empty form. Your interest is much deeper. My experiences here give me the greatest joy. The suffering I see around me gives me equal pain. I know that you feel for me because you would like to be in the thick of it all yourself. But your work is cut out for you. For those who are at a distance from you, you can but pray. And that you are doing with all your heart.

I may not be able to leave this place for six months. One of these days, I shall describe to you the nature of the work I am doing here.

Do please go to the Ashram whenever you can. It is one of your homes if one may have more than one.

You may write to me at the address given at the top.

With love,

Yours,
Bapu

8

"THE LAW OF LOVE"

Nadiad,
11th May 1917

My dear Esther,

I have your letter. I shall — we shall all look forward to your coming to the Ashram during Xmas. The main buildings will then have been ready and the weather will be delightful.

I hope you have read my letter to the Viceroy as also my letter in reply to Mr. P.'s speech. They contain in the briefest form my views on Government and the philosophy of life, and the one to the Viceroy shows in the vividest form the view I take of the law of love and suffering. Passive resistance expresses the idea in the crudest form. Indeed I dislike the phrase and conceived as a weapon of the weak it totally misrepresents the law of love. Love is the ensiform of strength. Love flows the freeliest only where there is entire absence of fear. Punishments of the loved ones are like balm to the soul.

Will you not try an absolute fast for your liver? You may drink boiled water copiously and if that is not enough you may drink orange juice diluted with water. If you feel weak and faint lie in bed, better still take a cold hip bath i.e. sit in a tub with your legs and the upper part of the body out of water. It is most invigorating. There is nothing like fasting for liver complaints.

Yours,
Bapu

9

"I ONLY HOPE I AM WORTHY OF ALL THIS LOVE"

Bettiah,
13th May 1917

My dear Esther,

Pray do not apologize for writing to me. Your letters are most welcome.

I am sure that your duty is to fulfil your undertaking with the Mission with all your heart. You can come to the Ashram only when they relieve you and when you feel in the clearest possible terms that you will come to render the service of humanity in greater fulness. When that time comes, the Ashram will receive you as one of its own. Meanwhile you are of course always free to go (to) the Ashram and stay there as long as you like.

At the Ashram we are now trying an experiment in education to serve as a pattern. When you go there, I am sure you will like the teaching staff. They are all I think good men and sane.

My work here gives me greater and greater joy day by day. The poor raiyats delight in simply sitting round me feeling that they can trust me to do the right thing. I only hope I am worthy of all this love. I constantly see the planters and do not despair of appealing to their sense of justice on behalf of the raiyats who have groaned under the weight of oppression all these long years. I shall send you a copy of my representation to the Government. You may not understand some points in it. Do not hesitate to ask me please.

With love,

Yours,
Bapu

10
"IN ANSWER TO PRAYER"

Bettiah,
19th May 1917

My dear Esther,

Your letter does credit to your heart. I really do not need the Rs. 50/- at the present moment. Just now we have more than we need. If you cannot think of using it for any other purpose you can think of, send it to the Ashram to be kept for an emergency fund. The Ashram too has no present need of money. You will not perhaps be surprised to learn that all the pecuniary assistance in my work has come in a way in answer to prayer. I have not been obliged to beg, i.e. for conducting the missions I have undertaken. But this is a long story into which I cannot go.

The work here continues as usual.

Do please remember me to Miss Petersen when you write to her and tell her I shall still expect her promised long letter.

With love,

Yours,
Bapu

11
"GOVERNMENTS RARELY MOVE EXCEPT UNDER PRESSURE"

Bettiah,
26th May 1917

My dear Esther,

Your letter is so good that I am taking the liberty of sending it to the Polaks to read and then forward it to Ahmedabad. I hope you don't mind my having taken the liberty.

Those who do not grow indigo, also want to make illegal gains. Hence they force the raiyats on their land to labour for them at a trifling wage or none at all at times and make them pay extras apart from rents. Yes, the condition is no better than that of slaves. The further papers I have sent you will throw more light on the question. I must say that the planters are not alone to blame. The planters happen to be English. Indian landlords are not better and some of them are much worse. It is undoubtedly the ignorance on this point of public men that has permitted the wrong to continue so long. Governments rarely move except under pressure.

For you no doubt Tamil takes precedence of every other language. But it will be most helpful if you could master the Devanagari script *. It is easy and it is the most perfect alphabet in the world in that each letter represents only one sound and almost all the sounds are represented by it.

Yours,
Bapu

12

EUROPEANS IN INDIA

Bettiah,
9th June 1917

My dear Esther,

As you will have seen from the papers sent to you, I have been to Ranchi from which place I returned only yesterday to find your letters.

Yours is a difficult question to answer. The total effect of European activity has not been for the good

* The script in which Hindi is written.

of India. The general body of Europeans who have come to India have succumbed to the vices of the East instead of imposing their own virtues on the East. It could not well be otherwise. Religion has not made a lasting impression on them as we see demonstrated even by the present war. My theory is that modern civilization is decidedly anti-Christian. And what Europeans have brought to India is that civilization, not the life of Jesus. You and a handful of others are striving to represent that life. It is bound to leave its mark upon the soil. But it must take time. " The mills of God grind slowly." You and people like you are not affected by the evil that stares you in the face. You get behind it, discover the good lying underneath and add it to your own stock, thus producing a perfect blend. What I want is a reciprocity of that method. And so I welcomed your visit to the Ashram as I welcome that of many European friends who are true to their best traditions and are broadminded enough to take in the best that this land has to give. Have I made myself clear? Please discuss this further and freely with me.

. I am likely to serve on the Committee the Government are about to appoint. I am presently framing a general note which will give you the details of the visit to Ranchi. It was a good thing I went.

Mrs. Gandhi and Devadas * are here now and so is Polak. Had I been arrested, Mrs. Gandhi and Devadas would have worked among the poor raiyats and heartened them for the struggle. I am most anxious for you to meet Mrs. Gandhi at the earliest moment.

* One of Gandhiji's sons.

Please don't think that I am killing myself with work.

With love from us all,

Yours,
Bapu

13

"A LIFE OF LOVE IN THE MIDST OF HATE"

Motihari,
11th June 1917

My dear Esther,

I am here for a day. I received your booklet * as I was going to the station. It put me in mind of some of the happiest hours I used to have years ago in South Africa. I read the booklet years ago when I found myself in the company of some very dear Christian friends. I have read it again today with better appreciation if one may write in this manner of a sacred work like this. For me truth and love are interchangeable terms. You may not know that the Gujarati for passive resistance is truth force. I have variously defined it as truth force, love force or soul force. But truly there is nothing in words. What one has to do is to live a life of love in the midst of the hate we see everywhere. And we cannot do it without unconquerable faith in its absolute efficacy. A great queen named Mirabai lived two or three hundred years ago. She forsook her husband and everything and lived a life of absolute love. Her husband at last became her devotee. We often sing in the Ashram some fine hymns composed by her. You shall hear and one of these days sing them when you come to the Ashram.

* *I Corinthians* — Chapter 13.

Thank you for the precious gift. I need such thoughts as are contained in the work.

With love,

Yours,
Bapu

PS. I am going to follow Drummond's prescription — to read the verses on Love * daily for three months.

Bapu

14

"TRUTH AND LOVE CONQUER ALL"

Motihari,
17th June 1917

My dear Esther,

I am going to Ahmedabad for 4 days. I return on the 28th inst. at the latest. There is no secret about what I have and you have every right to ask. My faith in Truth and Love is as vivid as in the fact that I am writing this to you. To me they are convertible terms. Truth and Love conquer all.

Yours sincerely,
Bapu

15

"INWARD GROWTH"

Motihari,
30th June 1917

My dear Esther,

I have your two letters before me. I returned from Ahmedabad on the 28th. I had a nice time there.

The city life I have always found to be chilling; the village life, free, invigorating and godly.

'Why has God given us so many gifts, powers,

* *The Greatest Thing in the World* by Henry Drummond.

skill to invent if we are not to use them ?' You have asked a question which I have asked myself and thousands are always asking. My humble opinion is that God has placed temptations in our way the strength of which is the same as that of the possibilities of rise in moral grandeur. We may use our inventive faculty either for inward growth or for outward indulgence. I may devote my talents for utilizing the falls from the Himalayas ; I only increase mankind's facilities for indulgence. I may use my talents for discovering laws which govern the falls from the Himalayas within me ; I serve myself and mankind by adding to the permanent happiness. You will make up for yourself countless illustrations showing that all our talents are to be utilized only for inward growth which can come from self-restraint alone.

Do please remember me to Mr. Bittmann * and thank him on my behalf for permitting you to come to the Ashram whenever you are free.

Your experience of the young man is nothing extraordinary. Pray do not be impatient to reform men and women whom you meet. The first and the last thing we have to attend to is to reform ourselves. In trying to reform, we seem to be judging. These young men often become worse for our handling. The safest course is to let such men leave us when they are found wanting. I have not sufficiently expressed myself. But you will understand. If not, please ask.

Yours,
Bapu

* The senior member of the Danish Mission in South India, who was unfailingly understanding and sympathetic with Esther Faering.

16

"EVERY ADDED YEAR IS ADDED RESPONSIBILITY"

Motihari,
1st July 1917

My dear Esther,

I have just received your letter telling you had entered upon a new year, you do not say what year. I appreciate your passion for the Ashram. May it satisfy all your wants and may it prove a place of joy and peace and of love such as you would find near your parents' hearth. Every year that closes upon us may be so much valuable time gained or lost as we have well or ill used it. To us who want to walk in the fear of God every added year is added responsibility.

Please tell me what books you are reading for Tamil examination and what you are paying your munshi, if you have any.

Yours ever,
Bapu

17

"THE GREATEST THING IN THE WORLD"

Ranchi,
8th July 1917

My dear Esther,

I have come here in connection with the Committee work. I leave here on the 11th for Motihari. This is supposed to be a healthy place being on a plateau.

Here is a copy of a letter I wrote to *The Pioneer*. I know you will like it. The letter has created quite a stir here. It has been favourably received so far.

Could you send a copy of *The Greatest Thing in the World* to Mr. Polak? I cannot procure it here. I copied out the verses and sent them to him. He now asks for the booklet. The book with me is being used.

Yours,
Bapu

18

"UNNECESSARY THINGS"

Motihari,
14th July 1917

My dear Esther,

I have just returned from Ranchi to find your letter awaiting me.

You never told me you had taken to vegetarianism. I am sure it is the proper thing for this climate apart from its religious value. A convert to vegetarianism is often told to eat of pulses, butter, cheese and milk more than during the meat-eating period. This is a mistake. Pulses may be eaten only sparingly. If one takes a fair quantity of milk very little butter is required.

In my opinion it is wrong to possess unnecessary things; they presuppose defence of things possessed against those who may covet them. They require care and attention which might well be devoted to more important matters and loss of them always leaves a pang no matter how detached you may feel about them.

The sittings of the Committee commence on Monday.

I was delighted to see your thoughtful gifts to Mrs. Gandhi.

With love from us all,

Yours,
Bapu

19
"PRAYER IS THE THING"

Nadiad,
3rd August 1917

My dear Esther,

You have raised big questions. I think the command of Jesus is unequivocal. All killing is bad for one who is filled with love. He will not need to kill. He will not kill. He who is filled with pity for the snake and does not fear him, will not kill him and the snake will not hurt him. This state of innocence is the one we must reach. But only a few can reach it. It seems to me to be impossible for nations to reach it. Equal progress in all is an inconceivable situation. Nations will therefore always fight. One of them will be less wrong than the other. A nation to be in the right can only fight with soul force. Such a nation has still to be born. I had hoped that India was that nation. I fear I was wrong. The utmost I expect of India is that she may become a great restraining force. But she must acquire the ability to fight and suffer before she can speak to the world with any degree of effect.

The pertinent question for you and me is what is our duty as individuals. I have come to this workable decision for myself, 'I will not kill anyone for any cause whatsoever but be killed by him if resistance of his will rendered my being killed necessary.' I would give similar advice to everybody. But where I know that there is want of will altogether, I would advise him to exert his will and fight. There is no love where there is no will. In India there is not only no love but hatred due to emasculation. There is the strongest desire to fight and kill side by side with utter helplessness. This desire must be satisfied by restoring the capacity for fighting. Then comes the choice.

Yes, the very act of forgiving and loving shows superiority in the doer. But that way of putting the proposition begs the question, who can love ? A mouse as mouse cannot love a cat. A mouse cannot be commonly said to refrain from hurting a cat. You do not love him whom you fear. Immediately you cease to fear you are ready for your choice — to strike or to refrain. To refrain is proof of awakening of the soul in man ; to strike is proof of body force. The ability to strike must be present when the power of the soul is demonstrated. This does not mean that we must be bodily superior to the adversary.

This is not a satisfactory letter but I think you will follow my argument. But in matters such as these prayer is the thing.

With love,

Bapu

20

"LOVE HAS TO BE PATIENT"

Bettiah,
12th August 1917

My dear Esther,

I have a moment to spare today. The lines you send are good and true. Belief and hope are great. They are indispensable for success. But love is greater. I find here that too great a strain is put upon it. Only this morning a powerfully built man came to me and insisted on my giving him help which was not in my power to give him. He would not leave me. I begged of him. He began weeping and beating his breast. His case is nothing. He came out of hope and love. How would I, wanting to love him, treat him ? Assuming that his weeping was sincere, must I put up with his presence and go on talking to him ? Such problems arise everyday. Love has to be patient. How to apply the injunction in cases such as I have quoted ? The only safe guide is the monitor within if one is pure-minded and sure of one's sincerity. We often deceive ourselves.

You may write for the time being to Ahmedabad which I expect to reach within a week from now. The Committee will have finished its deliberations within 3 days from today.

What treatment did you receive when you had the snake bite ? How did you manage to get bitten ? Where did it bite you ? Was the snake caught and killed ? I am always interested in the question of snake bites and snakes.

With love from us all,

Yours,
Bapu

21
DYSENTERY

Ahmedabad,
5th September 1917

My dear Esther,

I have your two letters really to answer, the last one is most touching. The cause of the terrible pain I have suffered was within myself. I twice ate when I ought not to have. The result was dysentery in a most acute form. I am now much better and am making daily progress. In four or five days I shall be out of bed.

With love,

Bapu

22
DESIRE

Ahmedabad,
6th Sept. 1917

My dear Esther,

I was delighted to receive your note. I hope to be in Madras for a day only on the 14th inst. I shall have to leave on the 15th instant in the evening.

Ever since my arrival here I have been on the move trying to spread the gospel of Satyagraha * in the place of methods of violence. It is an uphill task. You will see from the enclosed what I mean by Satyagraha.

It was not my intention that your remarks upon dress should be published.† I forgot to warn Dr. M. about it. He liked your views so much that he could

* Truth force.
† In *Young India*.

not restrain himself. I do hope you don't mind my sending to Dr. M. such of your letters as may appear to be helpful.

'To be free from desire' is a technical expression and means desire to be or possess something short of the highest. Thus love of God is not 'a desire'. It is the natural longing. But to possess a fortune so that I may do good is a desire and therefore to be curbed. Our good acts must be as natural to us as the twinkling of our eyes. Without our desiring they act automatically. The doing of good should be just as natural to us.

Yours ever,
Bapu

23

"LOVE MUST BE PATIENT AND HUMBLE"

Ranchi,
4th October 1917

Dear Esther,

I have not been able to write to you as often as I should like to have. I must let you share one of the richest experiences of life. Contrary to my expectation and owing to great strain I was down with malaria, just when I could least afford to have illness. I had to attend the Committee work every day. Quinine was the drug prescribed. I would not take it. My faith has saved me. I missed not a single meeting and we signed an unanimous report yesterday. I believe I have seen the last of the illness too. I have not the time to go into greater detail but when we meet you should ask me to give you the details of this experience. I take it you have read my letter to the Press

on the railways. If you have missed it, you should ask the Ashram to let you have a copy.

You were quite right (in) not coming to Madras.* Love must be patient and humble. It is the rich and the leisurely who can afford to be demonstrative in their love. We humble folks have naturally a different and better method of showing love. True love acts when it must, meanwhile it daily grows silently but steadily. In Motihari from 7th to the 13th. Then Ahmedabad.

Yours,
Bapu

24

" NOT OUR WILL BUT HIS "

Motihari,
Champaran,
12th Dec. 1917

Dear Esther,

Your letter just received grieves me.† 'Be careful for nothing' comes to my lips as I write these lines. Why fret and worry ? You are just now passing through fire. I am sure you will come out unhurt. It is your clear duty just now to obey those to whom you have given the right to control your movements.‡ You can oppose them only when they clearly hinder your

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* From Tirukoilur where Esther Faering was then stationed, to see Gandhiji who was in Madras for a few hours.

† Esther Faering had expected to be allowed to spend her Christmas holidays at Sabarmati Ashram, but the visit was vetoed by the Mission authorities.

‡ That is, to the authorities of the Danish Missionary Society.

spiritual progress. They receive the benefit of any doubt. You could certainly reason with them that just at this time of the year you will have perfect weather in Ahmedabad, loving attention and no worry. The very change of surroundings is likely to do you good. If you still fail, you have to accept their opposition with resignation. Please do not worry over your exam. That is a mere nothing. We are best tried when we are thwarted in what to us are holy purposes. God's ways are strange and inscrutable. Not our will but His must be our law.

Please write to me frequently and up to the end of the year, send your letters to Motihari. I should even value a telegram saying you are at peace with yourself, if you are that when you receive this.

With love,

Yours,
Bapu

25

"WHAT MATTERS IS THAT OUR CAPACITY FOR LOVING EVER EXPANDS"

Motihari,
13th January 1918

My dear Esther,

Having been wandering about I have not been able to reply to your letters. I was in Calcutta, thence went to Bombay and the Ashram and returned only yesterday. I had varied experiences which I cannot describe for want of time.

To say that perfection is not attainable on this earth is to deny God. The statement about impossibility of ridding ourselves of sin clearly refers to a stage

in life. But we need not search scriptures in support of the assertion. We do see men constantly becoming better under effort and discipline. There is no occasion for limiting the capacity for improvement. Life to me would lose all its interest if I felt that I *could* not attain perfect love on earth. After all what matters is that our capacity for loving ever expands. It is a slow process. How shall you love the men who thwart you even in well doing ? And yet that is the time of supreme test.

I hope that you are now enjoying greater peace of mind. Let your love for the Ashram be a service of strength in your attempt to do your duty there *. The Ashram is undoubtedly intended to teach us to do our assigned task with the utmost attention and with cheerfulness. There is meaning in our wishes (however pure) not being fulfilled. Not our will but His will be done.

I hope you are making progress in your Tamil lessons.

Did you receive from Messrs. Natesan & Co. a book they have brought out containing my speeches and writings ? I am sending you a copy of my speech in Calcutta on Social Service.

With love,

Yours,
Bapu

* "There" is the place where Esther Faering was working at the time, Tirukoilur.

26

"NO REMEDY BUT TIME"

2nd April 1918

My dear child,

I have your letter. The Poet * has now arrived here. That keeps me busy. He inquired about you. There is going to be a big strike on in Ahmedabad †. I don't know where it will lead to. It may keep me busy for some time. When are you likely now to go home? It is a good thing you are at Kotagiri ‡. I can understand your inability to write real letters. There are things in life for which there is no remedy but time. We have only to allow nature to perform the healing process.

With love,

Yours ever,
Bapu

27

"DAYS OF PEACE, BLESSING AND SPIRITUAL UPLIFTING"

On the train,
8th April 1918

Dear Esther,

I seem to have been cruelly neglectful in my correspondence with you. I could not be satisfied with giving only a line to you. I wanted to give you a long love-letter. I have not the quiet for framing such a letter. And I dare not wait any longer.

I do not know how I can describe my activities

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* The Poet, Rabindranath Tagore.

† A strike of the labourers in the big cotton mills in this town.

‡ A hill-station in the Nilgiris.

not one of which is of my own seeking. They have all come to me with a persistence I dare not oppose. What is a soldier to do if he is hemmed in on all sides ? Is he to concentrate his effort on dealing with one attack only and to court extinction by ignoring the other attacks that are being simultaneously delivered ? Obviously safety lies in dealing with all in the best way he can. Such is almost my position. Distress pleads before me from all sides. I dare not refuse help where I know the remedy.

The Ahmedabad strike provided the richest lessons of life. The power of love was never so effectively demonstrated to me as it has during the lock-out. The existence of God was realized by the mass of men before me as soon as the fast was declared.* Your telegram was the most touching and the truest of all. Those four days were to me days of peace, blessing and spiritual uplifting. There never was the slightest desire to eat during those days.

The Kaira affair,† you must have understood from my letter to the Press. I wrote one on the fast too. If you have not seen the letters, please let me know.

I hope you are keeping well. In liver complaints nothing answers so well as fasting.

Please address your letters to Ahmedabad or rather Sabarmati.

With love,

Yours,
Bapu

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* Gandhiji fasted during some days of the strike.

† The harvests here failed and the peasants challenged the Government assessment of their crops for the purpose of taxation.

28

" I AM PRAYING FOR LIGHT AND GUIDANCE "

Nadiad,
30th June 1918

My dear Esther,

I had no time to write to you ere this. I wonder if you have read all I have been writing and saying just now. What am I to advise a man to do who wants to kill but is unable owing to his being maimed? Before I can make him feel the virtue of not killing I must restore to him the arm he has lost. I have always advised young Indians to join the army but have hitherto refrained from actively asking them to do so, because I did not feel sufficiently interested in the purely political life of the country or in the war itself. But a different and difficult situation faced me in Delhi. I felt at once that I was playing with the greatest problem of life in not tackling the question of joining the army seriously. Either we must renounce the benefits of the State or help it to the best of our ability to prosecute the war. We are not ready to renounce. Indians have a double duty to perform. If they are to preach the mission of peace, they must first prove their ability in war. This is a terrible discovery but it is true. A nation that is unfit to fight cannot from experience prove the virtue of not fighting. I do not infer from this that India must fight. But I do say that India must know how to fight. Ahimsa is the eradication of the desire to injure or to kill. Ahimsa can be practised only towards those that are inferior to you in every way. It follows therefore that to become a full Ahimsaist you have to attain absolute perfection. Must we all then first try to become Sandows before we can love perfectly? This

seems to be unnecessary. It is enough if we can face the world without flinching. It is personal courage that is an absolute necessity. And some will acquire that courage only after they have been trained to fight. I know I have put the argument most clumsily. I am passing through new experiences. I am struggling to express myself. Some things are still obscure to me. And I am trying to find words for others which are plain to me. I am praying for light and guidance and am acting with the greatest deliberation. Do please write and fight every inch of the ground that to you may appear untenable. That will enable me to find the way.

With love,

Yours,
Bapu

Devadas is in Madras now and if you are in Madras you should meet him. His address is....He is taking Hindi classes.

29

"CONTINUE YOUR WORK"

Nadiad,
9th July 1918

My dear Esther,

Of course you were quite right in putting me the question you did. I am looking forward to your reply to my explanation.

I appreciate your preference for country life and country children. They are more innocent and hence more lovable.

Yes, it is your duty to continue your work to the end of your contract. I know the girls * will gain by your very contact. And for that matter I don't mind their receiving faulty education.

Devadas has just risen from a sick bed. I know he will be delighted to meet you. Do please find him out, if he has not found you out. And if you have the time, I would like you to meet him as often as possible.

With love,

Yours,
Bapu

30

"QUIETLY GO THROUGH YOUR CONTRACT"

Bombay,
22nd July 1918

My dear child.

I have been debating with myself whether to write to you or not to. Your letter made painful reading. I am today at the Ashram and have just worn the second vest sent by you. I came to know of it only today. It does not fit well. The sleeves are too short. But that matters little. I am wearing it and shall wear it out.

I am quite sure that you must quietly go through your contract even though you may be prohibited from coming to the Ashram or writing to me. You will gain greater strength of will and purpose by the enforced discipline and restraint.

---

* The pupils in the Danish Mission Boarding School in Tirukoilur.

It will be a privilege if you are permitted to write to me and receive letters. Do please tell me what final decision has been arrived at.

I have suspended Civil Disobedience for the time being. You will see my letter to the Press.

With love,

Yours,
Bapu

31

"YOUR COURSE OF DUTY"

Bombay,
(Undated)....1918

My dear Esther,

This is my first attempt to write after the relapse.

Though I am not quite clear about your course of duty, I suppose it is as well that you responded to Mr. Andrews's appeal.* I myself doubt the utility of your going there. Your letters to follow will make this point clear. I am very, very sorry that you are not at the Ashram, during this long vacation. The enforced separation however brings you closer to the Ashram.

You will be glad to hear that I daily wear the vests made by you. They are a perpetual reminder of your loving service.

I am feeling better for the last two days but no progress like this can be considered reliable until it lasts a fortnight or so.

More from Mahadev †.

With love,

Yours,
Bapu

* That Esther Faering should go and work at Shantiniketan.
† Mahadev Desai, Gandhiji's secretary and friend.

32

"THE MUSIC OF THE SPINNING WHEEL"

Secunderabad,
1st April 1919

My dear child,

My hand is still too shaky for steady and continuous writing. But I feel I must make the attempt to give you something in my own hand. I was so sorry I did not see you at the station.* I felt keenly for you and poor Mahadev. Both of you are sensitive, almost cast in the same mould. I was shuddering as I looked through the window when the train steamed out; I felt that he would run so madly to catch the train that he might drop down from sheer exhaustion. I was glad to see him last night at Bezwada.

I hope you wrote to the Collector as you had agreed you would. Please let me know whether he said anything in reply.

Please tell the girls † I am going to make daily use of the blanket sheet they have sent me. But I expect them soon to be able to weave hand-spun cotton and spin it themselves. The music of the spinning wheel is superior to any I know; for it is the music that finally clothes the naked men when the machines will be rusting from disuse (for men will some day be sick unto death of the maddening speed of the machine), posterity will still require clothing and hand-spun yarn will be the fashion. I am asking M. to send you some hand-spun yarn.

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* In Madras.

† The girls in the Danish Mission Boarding School, where E. F. was now working.

Our train was late and we missed the connection here. So we have an idle day. This enables me to write to you.

I wish you could introduce Hindi in your school. You may consult the Superintendent about it. Have you read my plea for Hindi ?

With deep love,

Yours,
Bapu

33

"THE HAPPIEST MAN ON EARTH"

On the way to Bombay,
under arrest,
10th April 1919

My dear child,

I have your bank note. I only hope you will not deny yourself the necessaries of life. I am handing the note to the Ashram. Is that right ?

I received last night on my way to Delhi an order not to enter the Punjab. I disobeyed it there and then and I was arrested. I received two further orders — one not to enter the Province of Delhi and the other to confine myelf to Bombay. They are now taking me to Bombay. If they set me free I shall immediately disobey the order of confinement. I am perhaps the happiest man on earth today. I have during these two months experienced boundless love. And now I find myself arrested although I bear no ill-will to anybody and although I am the one man who can today preserve the peace in India as no other man can. My imprisonment therefore will show the wrongdoer in his nakedness. And he can do me no harm for my spirit remains calm and unruffled.

You will rejoice that you have a friend to whom God has given the power to love even those who call themselves his enemies and to rejoice in sufferings. I say this because I do not want you to grieve over the impending imprisonment. The officer in charge of me is very kind and attentive.

More from Mahadev if he remains free for any length of time.

With love,

Yours ever,
Bapu

Did you receive my letter written in Bezwada or some place * on my way to Bombay from Madras ?

Bapu

34

"NO THOUGHT, NO ACT IS LOST"

Bombay,
Wednesday

My dear child,

Mahadev has made himself ill by his self-will. A self-willed friend, brother, son or secretary often fails at the crucial moment. Mahadev is all these four rolled into one. At first I thought I would revenge myself upon him by fasting. In that case you would have come down upon me with that remarkable word from the Bible 'Vengeance is mine'. I am therefore adopting a less drastic method — doing the letter-writing myself. It is a pleasurable sensation for me to do continuous writing for any length of time. My hand too works fairly steadily.

* Actually, Secunderabad. See letter 32.

I wish you would not torture yourself so for not sharing the sorrows of those you love. For you to finish your agreement * is severe enough self-restraint. It is absolutely necessary. If you have real love as I know you have, it must silently but none the less surely affect your present surroundings. No thought, no act is lost, says the Bhagawad Gita. You are therefore doing your duty to the full by patiently and conscientiously doing your present work. Even the fresh energy you will get on the hills is to be used for the sake of your work. Why then worry ?

The Swadeshi vow † extends to personal clothing only. I dare not ask you to deny yourself the use of Danish gifts from loved ones. It is enough if in future you buy only Swadeshi cloth and let your other things also be Swadeshi so far as possible. We shall discuss greater changes when we meet again.

Mr. D. passed a few days with me. He is now in Delhi. Do tell S. I was grieved to hear of his illness. He must make himself healthy and strong.

With love,

Yours,
Bapu

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* Agreement with the Mission.

† Vow taken by nationalists to use only cloth and all other articles which were made in India, and to boycott all foreign goods.

35

"NOT A SINGLE STEP IN HASTE OR IN ANGER"

Laburnam Road,
Bombay,
27th June 1919

My dear child,

Your letter just received makes me extremely sad. I cannot conceive the possibility of **their** * deporting you. But if they should, you have to cheerfully submit to the fate. If you wish me to, I shall gladly correspond with the Government. I may fail in my attempt. That would not matter. My advice to you also is that if they impose conditions on which alone you could stay, you should accept the conditions in so far as they are not humiliating.

I may commence in my person Civil Disobedience next week. It is therefore at the present moment hardly possible for us to meet.

As for Swadeshi, there is no need for you to discard what you have from home. It is enough for you to confine all your present needs to Swadeshi things. The vow is only restricted to personal clothing.

Subject to your Board's * consent you should introduce spinning wheels in your school.

Regarding yourself, I suggest also your consulting Mr. Bittmann and being guided by him. Shall I write to him ? I am so anxious that not a single step be taken by you in haste or in anger. Then whatsoever happens will be for the best. Please write to me often.

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* E. F.'s friendship with Gandhiji had now begun to attract the notice of Government and the Police.

* Of the Danish Missionary Society.

With deep love,
Written in haste and unrevised.

Yours,
Bapu

36

"HE MAKES US STRONG"

Laburnam Road,
Bombay,
24th Aug. 1919

My dear child,

Sundaram's letter about you had made me very gloomy. My heart goes out to you in your sorrow. But I know that if we trust in God when we are weakest, somehow He makes us strong. Deep down in me therefore, there is the feeling that all would be well with you no matter what happens to you. I could not, however, restrain myself from writing to the Governor * Here is a copy of my letter to him. If you are free, you would come down at once to the Ashram. I want to write to Mr. Bittmann but I shall await reply to this. You will know the rest from my letter to the Governor. If it does not represent the situation correctly in any way, you will please let me know. You will be an unworthy child if you will not let me know your pecuniary wants.†

With love,

Yours,
Bapu

* The Governor of the Province of Madras. This letter is not now extant.

† As her salary from the Mission had now been stopped.

37

"GENTLE, TRUE AND CHARITABLE"

Undated

My dear child,

You have been writing fairly regularly but I have been unable to do so. You know the reason why.

The pain I suffered was really nothing. Chhotelal made more of it than was deserved. I am taking all reasonable care of the body.

I take it that there is no hurry about your giving a final answer to the Board or Mr. Bittmann. Yours is a difficult case. I am most anxious that you should be absolutely true and faithful to the Board and that they should not in any way feel that you had done anything unworthy. Shall I write to Mr. Bittmann — am I spelling his name correctly? I have not your letter by me — even as I wrote to the Governor? Your service to India should be rendered as a true Dane and a Christian. You are serving because your Christianity prompts you to do so. And it is not enough that you feel so, it is necessary that your people should realize it through your love, humility and nobility. I do not know how best it can be done. Anyway your letters to them should be gentle, true and charitable — never harsh, bitter or reproachful. After all yours in a way is a rebellion and it can only be justified by success in the religious sense of the term even as Daniel's and Bunyan's were justified.

I am glad you are keeping well. Are you comfortable? You will be a bad child if you fail to express your wants to me. If you are in need of money, you will not hesitate to tell me so.

It is a strange phenomenon everybody wanting to learn English.* You should satisfy their desire within bounds. Do tell me a little more fully as to who wants it.

With love,

Yours,
Bapu

38

"I WANT YOU TO BE GREATER CHRISTIAN"

Delhi,
.......1919

My dear child,

I was sorry to leave the Ashram as soon as you came.† I wanted so to have a long chat with you and to comfort you if you were anxious about anything. I felt more sorry when Devadas told me you had not enough to cover yourself. I hope you asked for what you wanted and that someone anticipated your wants.

You know the changes that have been made regarding cooking. B. will be out of the kitchen. I would like you to help A. in the kitchen. But you shall not do so if it costs too much patience. She has not an even temper. She is not always sweet. And she can be petty. At the present moment she is weak in body too. You will therefore have to summon to your aid all your Christian charity to be able to return largeness against pettiness. And we are truly large only when we are that joyfully. I have known

* E. F. had apparently mentioned the desire of parents in South India that their children should be taught English.

† At last E. F. is able to return to Sabarmati, and this time she comes as an inmate, not as a mere visitor.

friends being generous in a miserable spirit. Their generosity has become a kind of martyrdom. To rejoice in suffering, to pity the person who slights you and to love him all the more for his weakness is really charity. But we may not be able to reach that stage. Then we should not experiment. And so, my dear Esther, if you find A. trying your nerves, you must avoid the close association I am suggesting to you. On no account shall I have you to lose your inward peace and joy. I want you so to order your life that the Ashram gives you greater joy, greater happiness and finer perception of truth. I want you to be a greater Christian for being in the Ashram. You were with me the whole of yesterday and during the night. I shall pray that you may be healthier in mind, body and spirit so as to be a better instrument of His service.

And I want you to befriend D. Mahadev will tell you who he is. I have not the time for writing more.

You may share this letter with Mahadev if you wish to. This has come to me in answer to prayer. Early this morning I wanted to send you a word of cheer. I feel for poor Mahadev just the same. He has an unequal burden to carry and thank God he has a most sensitive conscience that is unforgiving towards him. But he is fretful. He has not that abundant *experience* of the divine in him and so he worries.

Help him please and derive help from him.

Write to me of your experiences of your Madras visit and tell me how you felt them.

With deep love,

Yours,
Bapu

39

"LOVE IS NEVER AFRAID"

On the train,
Thursday,
......1919

My dear child,

I do want you to feel at home at the Ashram. I do not want you to feel or think you are in the midst of strangers. Pick up a few words in Hindustani daily and the linguistic barrier will vanish.

If the Ashram is your home, you must reproduce the necessary home comforts. Pray demand them. Send me a line daily.

Remember that love is never afraid. It has *no secrets*. You will therefore open your heart to all and you will I doubt not find a response in every heart. Love will not be denied for it is ever patient and ever suffering. And love is service therefore it ever rejoices in service.

Do keep your health.

Bapu

40

"THE CHILDREN"

Delhi,
Friday......1919

My dear child,

You will teach the children * not so much reading and writing as what is character and what it means. It therefore gives me much joy to know that you will soon be coming in close touch with the children.

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* The children in the Ashram.

Please tell S. to write to me as also K. and M.

I am not likely to return yet for a fortnight.

Mr. Andrews * is with me and we are both trying to bring about peace.

I wonder if the coming of the children causes some overcrowding and inconvenience.

Yours,
Bapu

41

"LET YOUR LIFE SPEAK"

Lahore,
Undated

My dear child,

I have your two letters. I leave Delhi today with Mr. Andrews.

I am glad you are feeling at home there. I am most anxious that you should retain your health and get stronger than you are. The best thing of course is not to worry about anything. Be careful for nothing and take or prepare the diet that suits you. Ba † wrote to me you were looking after her.

I may some time describe the work here. It is difficult work but it is useful and people gain by it.

Please do not write for *Young India* ‡ at present. I do not want to disturb the Government though there is nothing wrong about your writing on the

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* Charles F. Andrews.

† Ba means 'Mother' — hence Mrs. Gandhi.

‡ The English Weekly which Gandhiji edited and which he used as his main vehicle of communication with the general public.

educational system. For the time being let your life speak to your surroundings.

With love,

Bapu

42

"A PRECIOUS TIME"

Lahore,
Monday......1919

My dear child,

I have your letter.

I am having a precious time here. I may not be able to come in the early part of November after all.

Mr. Andrews is here and we often talk of you.

Keep good health please.

With love,

Yours,
Bapu

43

"A WILLING INSTRUMENT OF SERVICE"

Lahore

My dear child,

I have your sweet letters. But you will not expect regular replies from me for the time being. I am having rich experiences of life. When you render yourself a willing instrument of service, inexpressible joy is the reward. But more later or when we meet.

With love,

Yours,
Bapu

44

"A MOST WONDERFUL EXPERIENCE"

C/o Sarla Devi,
Chandhram, Lahore.
24th October 1919

My dear child,

This is just to tell you you are with me in thought. I had a most wonderful experience here.

With love,

Yours,
Bapu

45

"ASK FOR ALL THE SERVICE YOU NEED"

Lahore,
4-12-1919

My dear child,

Why have you become ill ? You ought not to take upon yourself tasks which are beyond you. You are not capable of going 3rd class to Bombay. Indeed you need not have gone to Bombay. However do be well quickly by asking for all the service you may need. What was the matter with you ? Mr. M. has described your malady somewhat. Please tell me all about it.

With love and prayers.

Yours,
Bapu

46
"THE PRESENCE OF GOD"

Lahore,
7-12-1919

My dear child,

I have your two letters including the long one. You have done well in sending it.

As I have already said, you have come to the Ashram not to lose your Christianity, but to perfect it.

If you don't feel the presence of God at the prayer meetings then remember that the names Rama and Krishna signify the same as Jesus to you.

You should most decidedly not attend these meetings. You should go and pray in your private chamber. The prayer meetings are not meant to force anyone into a position. They are meant for free men and women. The children must attend. Those who abstain from sheer laziness must attend. But for you, no one can misunderstand your abstinence. You will therefore please do that which gives you the greatest peace. The Ashram is nothing if it does not enable you to realize God more and more fully day by day. If on Sundays or any other days you would go to Church of course you shall do so.

I am so glad you have given me that long and beautiful letter and enabled me to enter more fully into your heart. Your coming is a joy to me. It will be a greater joy, if upon experience you find it gives you peace, health and real joy and if it thereby enables the other Christians to see that God and Christianity can be found also in institutions that

do not call themselves Christian and that truth is the same in all religions though through refraction it appears for the time being variegated even as light does through a prism.

I feel like you that it is too early for you to go to Madras even to meet Miss Petersen. Will she not come to the Ashram? She ought to. Let her come and see it in its new habitation and feel its progress if there is any made. Please give her my love.

I do hope you have now completely recovered. You should not trifle with your body. You cannot take the liberties that those born on the soil can. You must therefore insist on the comforts your body needs.

With love,

Yours,
Bapu

47

"THE FIRST STEP TO A TRULY GODLY LIFE"

Lahore,
Sunday......1919

My dear child,

I have your letter and had the vest also. May I thank you for it? I am having it washed.

Have you commenced spinning? I would like you to study my article on Swadeshi in *Young India*. Will you please learn spinning and religiously give it one hour every day? Your and my forefathers wore only hand-spun and hand-woven clothing. The words spinster (from spinning) and wife (from weaving) are highly significant. I would like you to set an example to the ladies of the Ashram in regular

spinning. Is F. doing any now? If not please tell her and R. not to neglect it. They were to do it for a fixed time every day and so were all the ladies for that matter.

I am glad they all nursed you during your illness. Mutual help and service is really the first step to a truly godly life.

With love,

Yours,
Bapu

48

"NEVER ALLOW YOUR SPIRIT OF SACRIFICE TO MAKE YOU SOUR"

Lahore,
24th January 1920

My dear child,

I was delighted to receive your letter on my arrival in Lahore yesterday.

I am glad you have opened out your heart. It is the truest test of friendship and affection. You enable me to help you when you do open out. I had no notion that you had already observed A.'s pettiness. I simply warned you, as I asked you to come in closer touch with her. As it is my warning reached you just in time. God will give you wisdom and courage to do the right thing at the right moment. Only remember one thing, never allow your spirit of sacrifice to go the length of making you sour and disgusted with yourself or your surroundings. This is one of the sorest temptations to which workers are exposed. They go on sacrificing themselves till they become disgusted with everything and everybody for want of

response. We sacrifice truly when we expect no response. It is well worth knowing the root meaning of the word. It means, as you might know, 'to make sacred'. We make neither ourselves nor others sacred when we are irritated or angry. There is often more sacrifice — sacred making — in a divine smile than in so-called substantial sacrifice. The instances of Mary and Magdalene * occur to me as I write these lines. Both were good but the one who simply waited upon her Lord without making any fuss was probably more self-sacrificing than the other. And so may it be with you. Do not overtask your spirit in trying to win over A. or anybody else. Immediately you find that you cannot get on with her, you must have a separate kitchen for yourself. You could still serve her but not be so intimate with her. Nothing that you do there should tire out either your spirit or your body.

Do please ask for every convenience you may need whether for food or otherwise. Ask M., I. or anybody who has come nearer you.

Yes D. is all you describe him. I would like you gently to get him to realize his responsibility and concentrate on his studies. Supervise his letter-writing. See that he writes fully and neatly to his mother every day.

My heart is with you in your sorrow. I can understand your desire to be with your brother in Denmark. But you have chosen a different path — a path that does not admit of exclusive service. May God give you strength for your task.

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* Gandhiji is speaking from memory; he really means Mary and Martha.

I agree with you about M. He is needlessly anxious about his health. He is prized not for his body but for his spirit. It must be a privilege for friends to nurse him in his illness.

With love,

Yours,
Bapu

49

"HE MUST WRITE"

Lahore,
26th January 1920

My dear child,

I have your brief note. I hope you have been receiving my letters regularly. I have hardly missed a day. I cannot send you a love-letter today as I have not many minutes for the post.

How is D. shaping? Please tell D. he has not written to S.* for the last 4 days. He must be regular in writing.

Please see that he writes at least a p.c. every day.

Yours,
Bapu

50

"RESIST NOT EVIL"

Sunday,
......1920

My dear child,

M. tells me you are now boarding with I. I am glad you will certainly feel at home there more than anywhere else if only because you have someone who will talk to you constantly in English. And you can

* D's mother.

shower your discriminating love on F. with immediate results.

I shall feel deeply hurt if you lose your health and your peace of mind. 'Resist not evil' has a much deeper meaning than appears on the surface. The evil in A. for instance must not be resisted, you or for that matter I must not fret over it or be impatient and say to ourselves, 'why will not this woman see the truth or return the love I give her'. She can no more go against her nature than a leopard can change his spots. If you or I love, we act according to our nature. If she does not respond, she acts according to hers. And if we worry, we 'resist evil'. Do you agree ? I feel that *that* is the deeper meaning of the injunction. And so, in your dealings with everybody I want you to keep your equanimity. Secondly please do not deny yourself anything you may need for your bodily comfort. Ask me, if you will not ask anybody.

I want you to write to me daily whilst I feel uneasy about you.

With love and prayers,

Yours,
Bapu

51

"HAPPY GRIEF AND MOURNFUL JOY"

Lahore,
Tuesday......1920

My dear child,

I have your dear telegram and two letters in one day. I had telegraphed before I received your letter about your father. I am sure that you should answer

that call by going * as early as possible. Only I want to have many a chat with you before you go. Never mind the weakness of body today. I would like you still to consider the Ashram as your home to which you could return whenever you wished to. If you feel like going now to Madras and come back on your way to Denmark you may do so. But I prefer seeing you before you go to Madras. But pray do whatever is in your opinion best. Take warm baths and you will get rid of the rash. The hip baths must do you good.

I want Devadas to go with you. I shall discuss it with him and with you when we meet. The idea of Mahadev going attracts me more.

D. has a little book given to him by a missionary. It is called the *Inner Shrine*. In a hymn I read these lines, " With happy grief and mournful joy, My spirit now is filled ", and at once I thought of you. Happy grief and mournful joy are wonderful expressions. But no more today.

With love and prayer,

Yours,
Bapu

52

" A TOOL FOR HIS SERVICE "

My dear child,

I passed two days by without writing — but not without thinking or talking of you. Your health is not what it should be. You may not be able to digest chapati. You should then take the usual loaf. A. will bring it for you. Tell I. Sahib about it. And you may take milk in the morning with some fruit and bread

* To Denmark.

and curd for breakfast, with some vegetables simply boiled. Perhaps the dholl * (sic) may not suit you. Thus a little bread, a little rice, a little vegetable and dahi † may be your breakfast. In the evening too it may be this. And a little fresh fruit, an orange, say at noon ; whether this is proper or something else you will finally decide. Only you must put your body right even as an artisan's first duty is to keep his tools in order. God has given us this body as a tool to be used efficiently for His service — neither for pampering nor for keeping in cotton wool but nor even for abusing or spoiling it by neglect. This is a wretched sermon but much needed.

With love,

Yours,
Bapu

53

"GOD WILL GUIDE YOU"

Wednesday,
......1920

My dear child,

I have your letters. It is no use crying over spilt milk. How to mend matters now is the question. You shall certainly go where you wish during Easter or any time. Your mental and spiritual happiness is the primary consideration. For the irregularity you mention there is a sovereign remedy tried by L. K. It consists in hip and friction baths and a diet without salt and other condiments. We have the book at the Ashram. Read it. S., K. and others know it. Ba also

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* lentils.
† curds.

has tried them for a number of years with the best of results. Do try them whilst you are there. Please don't hesitate to get bread. It is such a simple thing to procure.

I agree with you that you should have a quiet time and spiritual communion. Why will you not go to the Church in Ahmedabad ? But this is not suggested in the place of the convent. God will guide you and give strength and light.

With prayers and love,

Yours,
Bapu

54

"LOVE AND TRUTH...THE ONLY THINGS WORTH LIVING FOR"

Thursday,
......1920

My dear Esther,

You and Mahadev are foremost in my mind as I finished my mouth wash. I have detained you in Ahmedabad. But have I done right ? If your health grows worse where am I ? I therefore want you to await me only if you keep at least tolerably well. Otherwise we must meet on your return from Madras. Please don't consider yourself bound to stay on because I have expressed the wish. To express purest love is like walking on the edge of a sword. 'None of self and all of Thee' is easier sung than practised. We never know when we are not selfish even when we fancy we are all love. The more I think of it, the more I feel the Truth of what I have often said. Love and truth are two faces of the same coin and both most difficult to practise and the only things worth living

for. A person cannot be true, if he does not love all God's creatures; truth and love are therefore the complete sacrifice. I shall therefore pray that both you and I may realize this to the fullest measure.

Yours,
Bapu

55

"SURROUNDED BY TOO MANY PEOPLE"

My dear child,

No letter from you today. I am surrounded by too many people who want me, to be able to write to you a love-letter. I therefore send you my prayers and all love.

Yours,
Bapu

Do give me a cheering and cheerful letter if you can.

M. K. G.

Friday

56

"A MARRIAGE PARTY"

Lahore,
Sunday,
......1920

My dear child,

You have been a bad child to keep me without a line for so many days. I do however hear about you from others. You are at a marriage party. I have felt a little disturbed. What is it all about? How could you have fared in the midst of strangers? It was wrong if you went as a matter of duty. For no duty lay on you to attend such parties. If you went for the

sake of a change, I don't know that you had a desirable change. Where was the party? What were the people? Did they know English? What was your food there? Where did you have to sleep? Who suggested your going? It seems all so strange to me. I do not want you to make experiments in the dark. It is early Sunday morning and I am filled with anxiety about you. I know it is stupid to be anxious. God is above us all to protect and guide His own. But you give me the privilege of calling you my child. 'Rock of ages, cleft for me; let me hide myself in Thee.'

With deep love,

Yours,
Bapu

57

"A DISCIPLINED CONSCIENCE...IS THE VOICE OF GOD"

Lahore

My dear child,

The enclosed * was written in the morning. I have just got your pencil letter. I do clearly see that you made a mistake in accepting the invitation. You are young, you are inexperienced. You have a golden heart but it needs steadying. What is a big ship without a rudder? Where does it go? Does it not drift? My heart weeps for you today. You have left a surrounding † where you could grow after a fashion. You have come to a surrounding ‡ where you can grow much more if you will assimilate the surrounding. You must not prick yourself in your waywardness.

* Letter No. 56.
† The missionary community.
‡ The Ashram at Sabarmati.

A disciplined conscience is one to obey. It is the voice of God. An undisciplined conscience leads to perdition, for the devil speaks through it. I wish I was with you. ' Not everyone that sayeth unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven shall enter that kingdom.' I am quoting from memory but it will do.

Do put yourself under discipline. Never do anything without consulting Mahadev. Let him be as elder brother to you. Come close to him. Ask for the food you need, take the rest you want and put your mind and body at rest.

Write to me daily a full letter.

I shall pray for you and love you all the more for your waywardness.

Yours,
Bapu

58

"THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY"

My dear child,

I have seen your pathetic letter to S. I am glad you have poured out your heart in it. I have telegraphed to you today asking you not to leave * before I reach if you can at all stay. I want to have a few long chats with you in the early morning which I get only at the Ashram. I could urge you too to have the baths I have suggested. Ask for the water to be brought to you.

* Not to leave Sabarmati.

Are you an unworthy child? You have made yourself dearest to me by your wonderful love and conscientiousness. You do not for one moment think that your waywardness can make any alteration in my estimation of your worthiness. It is my privilege to point out where you need strengthening. If the body is the temple of the Holy, it requires the utmost care — certainly not pampering but equally certainly not disregard or even indifference.

With deep love always mingled with prayer,

Yours,
Bapu

59

"PRAYERFUL LOVE"

My dear child,

I see I have hurt you, forgive me. I wrote as I did, because I love you so. I am afraid it is no use your coming here, because I shall be touring from the 11th. So I cannot be with you even if you come. I hope to be with you on the 23rd at the latest. And we shall have some time at least together. Meanwhile please take the hip and the sitz baths. And why will you not be examined by the doctor who is there? If I were you, I should have no such compunction. But I don't wish to press you.

With prayerful love,

Lahore,
Thursday

Yours,
Bapu

60

"AN INSTRUMENT OF GREAT SERVICE"

On the train to Banaras,
Sunday

My dear child,

I am on my way to Banaras and we shall soon meet. How I wish you were with me serving me like Devadas. I know you would love it and so would I. No man can supply the place of father but I would like to be that to you to the extent of my ability, in this land of your adoption. I feel humiliated at the thought of your having to go to Denmark to recuperate yourself. Nothing would please me better than to send you to Denmark fully restored to health and a fuller Christian and a fuller daughter. And you have all the possibilities in you of a full growth in this life. May God grant you all your dearest wishes and may He make you an instrument of great service to humanity. Your love for India can only be acceptable as an expression of your love for humanity. 'None of self and all of Thee' is a big prayer, biggest of its kind.

May it be true of you and me.

With all love,

Yours,
Bapu

You will give your whole heart to A.

61

"FREED FROM ALL DOUBT"

The Ashram,
Sunday

My dear child,

I found three love-letters from you awaiting me on my return today. I was delighted to note the air of cheerfulness, quiet resignation and trust in God in your letters. The latter you always had in you. But your letters show deeper trust. May your trust go deeper and deeper still till at last you are freed from all doubt and therefore are all joy whatever happens. For as we go forward in our journey of life, we have always problems coming up for decision and they are the hardest when the voice of Satan nearly approaches the voice of God. Only fullest trust and perfect purity and extreme humility can lead us to the right choice.

I hope to be at the Ashram for at least a week and then hope to seek solitude and rest for a fortnight.

I shall certainly miss you tonight at the time of retiring.

With love,

Yours,
Bapu

You will be glad to learn that S.'s father has returned your watch. The value lies not in the return but in the motive behind it. You will take it when you return on your way to Denmark.

Bapu

62

"OF COURSE I WILL PRAY"*

The Ashram,
14th March 1920

My dear child,

Of course I will pray and I know I can do no better. Friends can help you little during the crisis you are passing through. May God protect you. "Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide, in the strife of Truth with Falsehood, for the good or evil side. Some great cause, God's new Messiah, offering each the bloom or blight, parts the goats upon the left hand and the sheep upon the right ; and the choice goes by for ever, 'twixt the darkness and the light."

I hope to pick out something like this, if I can, every day, charged with my prayers. What I have sent you today is from Lowell.

With love,

Yours,
Bapu

My case is decided. The court I understand has reproved us both but no penalty.

Bapu

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* This and the following letters, up to No. 72 were written to help E. F. during the days when the announcement of her betrothal to Dr. E. K. Menon brought a storm of criticism, much of it harsh and ungenerous, upon her head.

63

"MY SHARE IN YOUR SORROW"

More things are wrought by prayer
    Than this world dreams of.
Wherefore let thy voice
    Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats
    That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If knowing God they lift not hands of prayer
    Both for themselves and those who call
                                        them friend ?
For so the whole round earth is every way
    Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.

Tennyson

My dear child,

The above is my share in your sorrow for today. May it lighten your burden.

With love,

Bombay,
13th March 1920

Yours,
Bapu

64

"IN ALL THINGS THEE TO SEE"

Teach me, my God and King,
    In all things Thee to see,
And what I do in anything,
    To do it as for Thee,
All may of Thee partake,
    Nothing can be so mean
Which with this tincture, 'for Thy sake',
    Will not grow bright and clean.
A servant with this clause
    Makes drudgery divine ;
Who sweeps a room as for Thy laws
    Makes that and th' action fine.
This is the famous stone
    That turneth all to gold ;
For that which God doth touch and own
    Cannot for less be told.

George Herbert

My dear child,

May there be some line, some word, some thought to soften your grief.

With love,

Bombay,
17th March 1920

Yours,
Bapu

65

"SUCH USE AS HE WILL"

Lord, it belongs not my care
  Whether I die or live;
To love and serve Thee is my share,
  And this Thy grace must give.
If life be long I will be glad
  That I may long obey;
If short, yet why should I be sad
  To soar to endless day?
Christ leads me through no darker rooms
  Than He went through before;
He that into God's kingdom comes
  Must enter by this door.
Come, Lord, when grace hath made me meet
  Thy blessed face to see;
For if Thy work on earth be sweet,
  What will Thy glory be?
My knowledge of that life is small;
  The eye of faith is dim;
But 'tis enough that Christ knows all,
  And I shall be with Him.

Richard Baxter

My dear child,

Another evening has come to fill me with thoughts of you. I pass them to our common Maker to make of them such use as He will for your good.

With love,

Yours,
Bapu

66

"SELF"

Oh I could go through all life's troubles singing,
Turning each night to day,
If self were not so fast around me, clinging
To all I do or say.
My very thoughts are selfish, always building
Mean castles in the air,
I use my love of others for a gilding
To make myself look fair.
I fancy all the world engrossed with judging
My merit or my blame,
Its warmest praise seems an ungracious grudging
Of praise which I might claim.
Alas ! no speed in life can snatch us wholly
Our of self's hateful sight,
And it keeps step, when'er we travel slowly
And sleeps with us at night.
O Lord that I could waste my life for others,
With no ends of my own,
That I could pour myself into my brothers
And live for them alone.

My dear child,

You have forgotten your promise. Do not keep me without anything from you for so many days. The above is my selection for the day.

With love,

Yours,
Bapu

67

"IN OUR FATHER'S HOUSE AT LAST"

I say to thee, do thou repeat
To the first man thou mayest meet
In lane, highway or open street —

That he and we and all men move
Under a canopy of love,
As broad as the blue sky above;

That doubt and trouble, fear and pain,
And anguish all are shadows vain.
That death itself shall not remain,

That weary deserts we may tread,
A dreary labyrinth may thread,
Through dark ways underground be led,

Yet, if we all one Guide obey,
The dreariest path, the darkest way
Shall issue out in heavenly day;

And we on diverse shores now cast,
Shall meet, our perilous voyage past,
All in our Father's house at last.

Trench

My dear child,

I am on the train to Delhi. I could not go out for rest. I sent you nothing yesterday. I could not. This may be my last for some days because I shall not know what will happen from day to day. Do let me have a line from you.

With love,

Bapu

Sunday,
21-3-'20

68

"HUMILITY"

Monday,
......1920

My dear child,

Here is my selection for today :

"He that is down needs fear no fall
He that is low, no pride,
He that is humble ever shall have
God to be his guide.
I am content with what I have
Little be it or much
And Lord ! contentment, still, I crave
Because Thou savest such.
Fullness to such a burden is
That go on pilgrimage,
Here little and hereafter bliss,
Is best from age to age."

J. Bunyan

With love,

Yours,
Bapu

69

"THE CASE IS FINISHED"

Bombay,
Wednesday......1920

My dear child,

The case is going on, and as I have a few minutes' interval, I want to give you a few lines.

You are constantly in my mind. Some times I even feel uneasy when I think of our chats and when I think that in some things I might have appeared harsh

when I had wanted to be gentle. One's speech cannot be judged by one's intentions but only the effect it produces on the hearer. Are you happy and joyful? How are you in body?

I would like you to return Mr. B.'s trunk. If you need another, you may take one in Madras. You will let me have your programme of course.

The case is finished and the judgment has been reserved. I have sent you a telegram.

With love,

Yours,
Bapu

70

"JOY WILL COME TO THE GODLY"

Thursday,
......1920

My dear child,

My heart and my prayers are with you. Your letter grieves me beyond words. That you should suffer so much pain! But true joy will come to the godly. And as my faith in your godliness is unshakable, I have a certain belief that you will have a peace full of joy.

I am anxious for you to get an early boat. The voyage will give you the solitude you need and your home and your father the comfort and the companionship you will want.

If you have not returned Mr. B.'s trunk, please do not send it by parcel. It may be returned on your coming back to Bombay. There is absolutely no hurry.

With love,

Yours,
Bapu

71

"FOUR DAYS' GOOD REST"

On the train,
30th March 1920

My dear child,

I have just received your letter for which I thanked God. I am from a resting place going to the Ashram. After leaving Delhi I have not been able to write to you. I had four days' good rest. I hope to go back after the 13th April. When are you going to Denmark?

With love,

Bapu

72

"BE SURE IT IS THE VOICE OF GOD"

Sabarmati,
15th April 1920

My dear child,

I have just returned from Bombay. I passed the fasting and prayer week at Bombay. It is true I have not written to you but that does not mean that I have thought any the less of you or prayed for you less lovingly. I had no time and I felt I had sent you enough verses to last you for some time. I should send more if I knew your condition of mind. And so I allowed a few days to pass by without committing myself to writing.

But now I have your precious letter. I am quite resigned to your marriage. I will not argue against it. You will do exactly as God guides you. Only always be sure it is the voice of God.

There is no certainty about my going to London. It is mere talk as yet; I have written to the Viceroy and much will depend upon the answer.

I had very rich experiences in Bombay during the fasting week. But of these when we meet. When are you likely to leave for home?

With love,

Yours,
Bapu

73

"A BEAUTIFUL PLACE"

Sunday, May 1920

My dear child,

I do not know whether you have arrived.* If you have, do come up to Sinhagarh. It is a beautiful place. It is reached from Poona by a Tonga. If I knew, I could easily arrange everything. But I know you are able to manage this yourself. Sinhagarh is about 13 miles from Poona. The Tonga hire is at least Rs. 5/-. Sometimes it is more.

With love,

Bapu

74

"THE HEAVENLY LINES OF TRENCH"

The Ashram,
9th May 1920

My dear child,

I did not at all like to part with you. But I knew it was good for your health's sake. I only hope that the expectation has been fully realized and that the climate of Sinhagarh has agreed with you.

* At Sabarmati, to bid farewell to the friends there, before leaving for Denmark.

I am sorry there is no chance of my being with you as early as I had thought. The great strike * commenced today. I however do hope that it will not last long. The mill-owners have no case and they have no fighters in their midst. I was in a big meeting last night. The men were full of courage and determination.

I cannot help writing down for us again the heavenly lines of Trench — 'Yet, if we will one Guide obey, the dreariest path, the darkest way shall issue out in heavenly day; and we on diverse shores now cast, shall meet, our perilous voyage past, all in our Father's house at last.'

With love,

Yours,
Bapu

75

"WE ARE ALL IN GOD'S KEEPING"

The Ashram,
16th May 1920

My dear child,

I cannot send you a love-letter, for the publication of the peace terms again unsettles the regularity of my work. I am glad you are able to leave quite so early as the 19th. I hope you received my telegram in reply to yours. Please do not worry about what happens to us here. We are all in God's keeping and if we wait upon Him and Him alone, whatever happens is for our good. Even so-called afflictions turn

* In the Ahmedabad cotton mills.

out then to be for our benefit. Give yourself perfect rest and peace at home, let your father meet you as a better Christian for having been to India and having come in contact with the Ashram and then when you are rested, strong in body, mind and soul return. May you have a safe voyage, a happy time at home and a safe return. You will write of course regularly and give me your home address.

With deep love,

Yours,
Bapu

76

"MAY GOD BRING YOU BACK SAFE"

Ashram,
21st May 1920

My dear child,

I tried to overtake you on Wednesday, but it was not to be. I had to settle the dispute of labour. I therefore postponed. They all told me you were anxious to meet me. Of course you were. A. is waiting to take the post, so I must be brief. I have your last precious letter. I know you will be all you say. May God bring you back * safe, strong in body, mind and spirit.

I hope you received my note on the "Berlin" †.

Yours,
Bapu

* From Denmark.
† The ship on which E. F. sailed for Denmark.

77

"THE KHILAFAT QUESTION"

Bombay,
25th June 1920

My dear child,

I have not been regular in writing to you as I had intended to. I have been too busy with the Khilafat question. I did however ask M. to write to you on my behalf. You must also be receiving *Young India* regularly.

I had expected to hear from you from on board. But as yet there is nothing from you. I wrote to you a letter to reach you on your steamer and another to London care of Thos. Cook. I do hope you received both these letters.

I am fixed up for the time being in Bombay. I enclose herewith the letters to the Viceroy. They will give you an idea of my activity. Devadas is with me.

I am anxious to hear about your meeting with your father and your health. Of course I expect to hear from you regularly.

With love,

Yours,
Bapu

78

"SPREADING LOVE FOR INDIA"

On the way to Calcutta,
2nd August 1920

My dear child,

I had your first long letter from home. I was delighted.

I know you are spreading there love for India. May God bless you and your mission.

With love,

Yours,
Bapu

79

"BY HIS GRACE....SWARAJ"

On Tour,
4th September 1921

My dear Esther,

I found your letter awaiting me on my return to Calcutta from the East Bengal tour.

I wish you and yours * a happy life of service.

I was longing for your letter and to hear how you were doing.

I cannot understand your not getting *Young India*. I am inquiring.

When you return to India, you will find the Ashram devoting its best time to carding, spinning and weaving. I wish you would study Danish hand-spinning, hand-writing, if there be any such in Denmark.

God is great. Not by the effort we are making, but by His grace it is possible to gain Swaraj this

* This letter was written after hearing the news of the marriage in Denmark of E. F. and E. K. M.

year. And then you return without hindrance.* There will be just as much steadfastness needed to work out Swaraj as is needed for attaining it. Let Anne Marie work here for its attainment and you will work there to make it a success.

With love to you both,

Yours,
Bapu

80

"BARDOLI"

5-2-1922

My dear child,

I have your welcome letter. You were certainly right in your attitude. Let the Government do what they choose. Please keep me informed of what goes on. At this stage I am not publishing the news. As you see I am in Bardoli preparing for mass Civil Disobedience. You must have read my letter to the Viceroy †.

With love to you all,

Yours,
Bapu

81

WELCOME TELEGRAM ‡

God Bless You Both.

Gandhi

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* The British Government for a time refused E. M. permission to return to India.

† The Viceroy was Lord Reading. The letter referred to is dated 1st February 1922 and was published in the Indian newspapers.

‡ The Menons had now returned to India and were helping Miss Petersen with her school and Ashram at Porto Novo.

82

"SURRENDER"

Ajmer,
8th March 1923

My dear child,

It is only here where I have come for a day, that I get the time to write to you. The loss of your Bohemian independence is more than made up by your sharing your life with another. If marriage has any meaning at all it must point to the greater self-surrender which is in store for everyone of us. The surrender by two dissimilar (in form) persons one to the other is greater independence because it is a realization of greater responsibility. The discharge of the greatest responsibility is the greatest independence. This is secured only by the fullest surrender to God.

I know you will come whenever you can. I am not moving from Gujarat for some time, if I am still left free. There are all sorts of rumours about my arrest.

Miss Petersen owes me a letter.

With my love to you all,

Yours,
Bapu

83

"I CANNOT LIVE WITHOUT TRUTH AND NON-VIOLENCE"

My dear Esther,

I am writing this at Sevghar which is a beautiful place in the Bihar tour. Today is my Monday *. I have your long letter before me. I have always thought of you all. I was much relieved to know that you had completely recovered and that the recovery was due to an Indian medicine. I hope that having regained your health, you will keep it.

It is good that Miss Petersen is to go to Denmark early next year. She deserves the rest. It is nice too that she will leave the school in a progressive state. I had no doubt about its success. Patience was all that was needed. In these days of many bogus or selfish things, people look askance at anything new or out of the ordinary.

Of course you are all coming into the Spinners' Association. Have you read the constitution?

I had a very sweet letter a month or two ago from a Danish lady. I would certainly love to go to Denmark. But I have no desire to leave India until non-violence is more firmly rooted than it is in the soil. I know that it is truth but I may be a poor representative of it. This I know that I cannot live without Truth and Non-violence.

If you take up the task of writing my biography, you have to pass many months at the Ashram and maybe even travel to South Africa and visit Champaran and Kheda, probably the Punjab too. It is a big

* Gandhiji was in the habit of observing every Monday as a day of complete silence.

job if it is done thoroughly. It was in these places I tried to work out non-violence as I understand and know it.

With love to you all and kisses to baby,

Yours,
Bapu

5-10-1925

I reach the Ashram in the beginning of November.

84

"WITH LOVE TO YOU ALL"

My dear Esther,

I was looking forward to hearing from you for a long time. I was therefore delighted to hear from you. I am glad you are better.

You have heard all about my fast? I am none the worse for it. I have almost regained the lost weight in ten days and am now resting with J. at Wardha.

Miss Slade whom we call Mira is with me and is coming to the Congress. She was glad to get your letter. She will write to you I expect if she has not done so already.

I hope to return to the Ashram about New Year's Day.

M. has lofty ideas of service. May they all be realized.

Is the school growing? How many children — boys and girls — have you? What is your syllabus?

With love to you all,

Wardha,
11-12-1925

Yours,
Bapu

I am here till 21st inst.

85

" FRIENDSHIP "

Ashram,
Sabarmati, 10-2-1926

My dear child,

I have your letter and I have the parcel too. There are no directions in the parcel beyond saying that there is a powder as an opening medicine and the contents of the bottle are for Malaria. So far as I am myself concerned at the present moment, I am free. If I get a renewal of the attack I do not know that I can take the medicine, for as you are aware, I can take only 5 ingredients during any 24 hours whether for food or for medicine. Most of these Ayurvedic medicines contain dozens of ingredients. Therefore, however useful they may be in themselves, for me they are perfectly useless. But so many people get malaria here and I would gladly try this remedy if I get the directions. Please therefore send them to me and if you know the ingredients, you may give me an idea of them.

Now about friendship. You have used the word ' friend ' in three different senses. If we have the capacity, we can all become friends as Jesus was. There, the word ' friend ' means a kind helper. The friendship between ourselves and those who are superior to us is also a one-sided thing. A father is and should be his children's friend. There it becomes companionship with the good, Satsanga as it is called in Sanskrit. What I have written about is intimacy between two or more persons, where there is no secret and where mutual help is the consequence of, not a motive for friendship. The motive is some indefinable attraction. It is this exclusive relationship which I

have considered to be undesirable and antagonistic to communion with God. Such was the friendship between the person I have described in the *Autobiography* * and myself.

Does not spinning naturally interest you? I should expect you, if you spin at all, to spin because you are interested in it. And if you are interested, you would master the mechanism and keep your instrument in perfect order as you will keep your stove in order if you are interested in cooking.

Spinning for me is an emblem of fellowship with the poorest of the land and its daily practice is a renewal of the bond between them and ourselves. Thus considered, it is for me a thing of beauty and joy for ever. I would prefer to go without a meal than without the wheel and I would like you to understand this great implication of the wheel. If you are to spin at all, I do not expect you to take up the wheel simply because I commend or the Congress recommends or because it is likely to be of economic value.

I am daily picking up strength little by little.

With love to you all,

Yours,
Bapu

86

BLESSINGS ON THE NEW BABY

My dear child,

My blessings on the addition to the family. Hope you and the baby are steadily progressing. Any of the names suggested by you is good. The shorter the better.

Yours,
Bapu

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* Published by the Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad-14, Price Rs. 7-0-0, Postage etc. Re. 1-9-0.

87

"KHADDAR FOR BABY"

The Ashram,
Sabarmati, 30-4-1926

My dear child,

I have your letter. I do feel disturbed about your health. You must regain your original freshness and strength.

I am sorry to hear about the disorganization of Miss Petersen's school. I have not received any yarn yet from the girls referred to by you. You can have as much khaddar rags as you want and soft used khaddar *. If you tell me what length you require I shall see to it being sent. It is difficult to fix any price for used khaddar. You will therefore either send what you can or not at all. You will not stint yourself in anything for the sake of paying for the khaddar that you may order nor will you on this account hesitate to ask for the exact quantity you want.

I am glad that K. is helping poor patients in the way he is doing. What does it matter so long as you make both ends meet and it need not matter even if one cannot make both ends meet in acts of service.

Andrews reaches Bombay tomorrow.

Yours,
Bapu

* For "nappies" for the new baby.

88

MORE KHADDAR FOR BABY

The Ashram,
Sabarmati, 23-6-1926

My dear child,

I have your letter. Now you know everything about the much talked of visit to Finland. I felt that the time had not yet arrived for going. I could see no clear definite light. Undoubtedly, had I gone to Finland, I would have gone to Denmark also. I had made that definite promise to Anne Marie and I would have loved to have seen your own home. But that was not to be.

Mirabehn is doing quite well and she is standing the heat wonderfully well. I am glad you have a helper. You have not yet told me what sort and what quantity of old khaddar is to be sent to you. But M. has made a parcel. It is being despatched today to the address given by you at 'Craiglea'. I suppose 'Craiglea' is the name of the cottage in Kotagiri. It is quite like K. that he should be devoting himself to the care of the sick. You refer to Rs. 10/-. Nothing has been received here as yet. Nothing need be sent.

Yours,
Bapu

89

PAYMENT FOR THE KHADDAR

The Ashram,
Sabarmati, 16-7-1926

My dear child,

I have your letter. Why must you enter into all the explanation in respect of Rs. 10/-? I would be grieved if you pinch yourself for sending me Rs. 10/- or anything. As there was a question in the Ashram as to whether the money was received or not and whether if it was received, it was mislaid, I told you about it. But, it would please me better if you will keep the khaddar and not think of paying for it. After all what has been sent to you is second-hand khaddar from old stock belonging to the members of the Ashram. Nor, need you hesitate to ask for more if you want more.

I am delighted to hear of the progress made by Nan *. It would be an achievement if she speaks three languages equally well when she grows up. I suppose, the strong will she inherits from her mother and gentleness from her father, or, will you say vice versa?

It is too early to think of what I shall do next year. But, if I do come to the South, I would love to go to Porto Novo.

With love to you all,

Yours,
Bapu

* E. M.'s elder child.

90

TYPEWRITERS HAVE THEIR USES

The Ashram,
Sabarmati, 8th Aug. 1926

My dear child,

I have your letter. At least at the top of it you have my own writing *, and for the time being it should be enough. I too detest the typewriter. I have a horror of it but I survive it as I survive many things which do not do lasting harm. If someone dispossessed me of the typewriter, I should not shed a single tear but, as it is there, I make use of it and, even believe that some time is being saved for more useful work. But, even in this belief, I may be totally wrong. It is so difficult to rise superior to one's surroundings always.

Evidently Anne Marie is doing great and good work. Prejudices die hard ! But, wherever there is earnestness, there is no difficulty about breaking down the hardest prejudices.

Mira wanted to go through 7 days' fast as a spiritual experience. She completed it this morning and broke it on fruit juice. She took the fast extremely well though she has lost ten pounds in seven days. But that of course is nothing.

I do not expect much from the Viceroy. He may be well-meaning, but, mere good intentions count for little. But as you have very properly guessed, I can only say, whether it takes long or short, salvation must come only through ourselves.

Yours,
Bapu

*This is one of the few typed letters.

91
ASHRAMS AND FASTING

The Ashram,
Sabarmati, 20-8-'26

My dear child,

I have your letter. I did not misunderstand your remark about typewriters. On the contrary, I liked it.

The literal meaning of an 'ashram' is an abode, but the associations about the ashram are these: It should be simple. It should not be merely a teaching institution. It should contain predominantly those who are pledged to perpetual continence. It should have associations of *sannyas*, meaning detached from the world. It should therefore be a voluntarily poor organization. There should therefore be rigid simplicity about it. Its object must invariably be formation of character with a view to self-realization. All men and women in an ashram are expected to do bodily labour and all enjoy an equal status. The idea of superiority has no place in it. The head of an ashram is in the place of a parent and he is expected to regard the rest as his own children. I wonder if I have now given you fairly the characteristics of an ashram.

It grieves me whenever I find that a medical man is weak or ailing. It is a perpetual reminder to us that medicine is such an incomplete, such an unreliable, and such an empirical science. If we think about it with sufficient detachment, we would at once realize its inherent weakness by understanding that there is no such thing as an absolute cure. The most potent drugs admit of innumerable exceptions. The most successful operation leaves literally and in the spirit a scar behind. It would certainly be a good thing, if you

could hasten your departure for Denmark. Change of climate will be the best cure.

What you say about fasting is quite true. It has no absolute value and it certainly does not produce the slightest spiritual effect if the motive behind it is not really spiritual. Fasting with a mixed motive ends with purely material results. But fasting for the sake of unfoldment of the spirit is a discipline I hold to be absolutely necessary at some stage or other in the evolution of an individual. I always considered Protestantism to be deficient in this particular. Every other religion of any importance appreciates the spiritual value of fasting. Crucifixion of the flesh is a meaningless term unless one goes voluntarily through pangs of hunger. For one thing, identification with the starving poor is a meaningless term without the experience behind. But I quite agree that even an eighty days' fast may fail to rid a person of pride, selfishness, ambition and the like. Fasting is merely a prop. But as a prop to a tottering structure is of inestimable value, so is the prop of fasting of inestimable value for a struggling soul.

With love,

Yours,
Bapu

92

THE UNIQUENESS OF JESUS

The Ashram,
Sabarmati, 17-9-1926

My dear child,

The Roman Catholic fast which you refer to in your letter is really no fasting at all but there is or there was a real fast also amongst them. However,

whether they have or they had or not is of no consequence to us. Neither fasting nor anything else that is imposed from without can be of any value. You need not have apologized for raising the question about Christ. In spite of most devout attention to every word ascribed to Jesus in the New Testament and in spite of my having read in a humble spirit all about Jesus, I have really not seen any fundamental distinction between Jesus and the other teachers, I can understand, explain and appreciate. That is the teaching you have imbibed from childhood and you would read everything else with that unconscious conviction. Nobody taught me in my childhood to differentiate. I have therefore grown without bias one way or the other. I can pay equal homage to Jesus, Muhammed, Krishna, Buddha, Zoroaster and others that may be named. But this is not a matter for argument. It is a matter for each one's deep and sacred conviction. I have no desire whatsoever to dislodge you from the exclusive homage you pay to Jesus. But I would like you to understand and appreciate the other inclusive position.

What M. has told you about the pecuniary difficulty is quite correct. But so is your remark. You will come here if God makes the way clear for you.

Yours,
Bapu

93

" IN THE MIDST OF DISTRACTIONS "

My dear child,

I have your pathetic letter. I was wondering why there was nothing from you so long. Now I know. It distresses me to find you in such a dilapidated condition. I am writing this in the midst of distractions. I have not a moment to spend. I therefore send you my love and prayerful blessings. I am in the South in April. I must make a desperate effort to meet you during the tour.

When Maria returns I must see what can be done for spinning.

With love to you all,

Yours,
Bapu

94 *

" AT PEACE WITH YOURSELF "

My dear child,

Your account of the meeting with the ailing sister † is touching. Give my love to her when you visit her again.

I hope you are at peace with yourself now. The children must be quite well. Kiss them for me if they will let me kiss them.

---

* Letters 94 to 109 were written from Yeravda Central Prison, Poona where Gandhiji was detained immediately after his return to India from the Round Table Conference.

The Menon family were in England, at Selly Oak, Birmingham.

† An Engilsh girl, poor and bed-ridden, who had a deep admiration for Gandhiji.

Maria was with me in Bombay. But I had hardly time to talk to her.

My love to all Woodbrooke settlement. Send my love to Miss Harrison and tell me where she is staying. Do you write to Maria ?

Love,

Y. C. P., Bapu
21-1-1932

95

"LOVE GIVES BECAUSE IT MUST"

My dear child,

I was delighted to have your letter again and the unexpected scribble from Nan.

I see you have a cosmopolitan company *. I only hope this does not give you more work than your health can manage.

No, the Gita does not teach differently. What it does teach is that all our acts must be natural and spontaneous even when unconscious. When they are so, there is no thought of reward or result. There is therefore, in pure love no giving and no taking. Put in another way there is no giving on earth without taking. Love gives because it must ; it is its nature. It therefore does not calculate whether there is a corresponding gain. It is unconscious of the giving and more so of the taking. Love is its own reward. When there is that ineffable love, there is a joy which is above all the so-called joys we think we experience

* The Menon home at Selly Oak was always an international centre.



Gandhiji demonstrating spinning in a Montessori School in London

from outward circumstances. It is that joy I want you to possess. There was a time when you thought, I thought, you had it. But you had not then gone through the fire. The joy that will surely be yours one day will come out of the purifying richness of that fire. It will steal over you when it does come. May it come soon.

We are both well.

Love,

Bapu

Y. C. P.,
28-2-1932

96

"GOD THE NEVER-FAILING"

My dear child,

I am always glad when I hear from you. Your letter is interesting and revealing. You are still fretting somewhat. That you should get over. If we have trust in God, we should not worry even as we would not when we have a trustworthy doorkeeper or guard. And who can be a better doorkeeper or guard than God the never-failing. It is not enough that we sing about such things or have a mere intellectual grasp. It is necessary to feel the thing within. Feeling is exactly like feeling pain or pleasure. It admits of or needs no argument. Who can argue us out of our experience? I write this, because I want you to be absolutely free from all care and anxiety.

The idea of giving the children dolls of different races was very good. What is the name of the Hindi girl and what is her province?

Did I tell you that Mahadev was with me?

Kisses to the children.

Love,

Bapu

Y. C. P.,
13-4-'32

97

"PEACE IN THE MIDST OF STRIFE"

My dear child,

I understand all you are doing. Only you must not work yourself into anxiety. If we simply make ourselves instruments of His will, we should never have anxious moment.

Yes, there is no calm without a storm, there is no peace without strife. Strife is inherent in peace. We should not know it without. Life is a perpetual struggle against strife whether within or without. Hence the necessity of realizing peace in the midst of strife.

It has been hot in Poona this time. As a rule it is never so hot in Poona. But the rains are now coming in and we are having beautiful sunsets and sweet songs of the birds.

Have you been to that patient * again?

I told you Mahadev was with me. He spins and cards about 5 hours daily. He is now spinning very fine counts. Owing to the weakness of my hands I cannot do much. I hope you are keeping well.

Love from us all and kisses to the children.

Bapu

Y. M., 22-5-'32

* The cripple girl mentioned in letter 94.

98

"IF THE SOURCE IS CONTAMINATED"

My dear child,

This is silence time. I have your longish letter — none too long for me. I forgot last time to tell you I had received the book you sent me. I shall read it as soon as I can. Every minute is premortgaged. Any new reading or other work that comes my way has therefore to await its turn unless it is of such paramount importance as to warrant suspension of current work.

Feeling is of the heart. It may easily lead us astray unless we would keep the heart pure. It is like keeping house and everything in it clean. The heart is the source from which knowledge of God springs. If the source is contaminated, every other remedy is useless. And if its purity is assured nothing else is needed.

This is written with the right hand, for the left has become worse than the right. There is nothing to worry about. Only it must have complete rest. I therefore spin on a wheel which has a pedal and draw the thread with the right hand.

We are three — all well.

Love from us all. Kisses to the children.

Bapu

Y .C. P.,
29-5-'32

99
"DIVISION OF LABOUR"

My dear child,

I have your letter. Do not fret, if you don't hear from me at the expected moment. My correspondence has been upset a bit. I am hoping that the matter will be soon put right. However a prisoner has got to be satisfied with the facilities that may be given to him for the natural satisfaction of his healthy wants.

When you see the invalid sister, you must tell her I often think of her. I wonder if you ever visit that little school in your neighbourhood of defective children *. I thought the institution had earnest workers. If you have the time I would like you to know more of the institution and its managers and tell me how it progresses.

You tell me how desolate B.'s house looked for want of the woman's touch. I have always considered this as a result of our false notions of division of work between men and women. Division there must be. But this utter helplessness on the man's part when it comes to keeping a household in good order and woman's helplessness when it comes to be a matter of looking after herself more here than in the West are due to erroneous upbringing. Why should man be so lazy as not to keep his house neat, if there is no woman looking after it or why should a woman feel that she always needs a man protector ? This anomaly seems to me to be due to the habit of regarding woman as fit primarily for housekeeping and of thinking that she must live so soft as to feel weak and be always in need

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* Visited by Gandhiji while in England for the Round Table Conference.

of protection. We are trying to create a different atmosphere at the Ashram. It is difficult work. But it seems to be worth doing.

Remember me and Mahadev to Mrs. W. when you write to her.

Kisses to the children.

Love,

Bapu

Y. C. P.,
18-7-'32

100

"GOD COMES THROUGH THE WAY OF FIRE"

My dear child,

Even from this distance I could realize your agony *. But God never comes to us except through the way of fire. There is a deep unconscious joy felt during such purifying agony. I hope that you were partaker of such joy during the trial. I saw or rather heard your name together with those of Horace Alexander and Andrews among the senders of a loving message from England. I am growing stronger day by day.

You won't expect a long letter from me today. I am expending what energy I have in writing love-notes to friends in England.

Love to you. Kisses to children.

Bapu

Y. C. P.,
30-9-'32

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* Agony of anxiety on behalf of Gandhiji who undertook a long fast at this time.

101

"DAYS OF AGONY AND INNER JOY"

Yeravda Central Prison,
(Poona)

My dear child,

I have your long letter of 4th Sept. That is a bygone age.

After the fast is like a new birth to me. I am rapidly gathering strength. The lost weight has almost come back. The lost strength will take a little time. The days of agony were also days of inner joy. It was a little penance for the great sin of untouchability committed by millions against their fellow beings. But you know all about it by now.

You must try to get rid of your rheumatism by steam baths and a diet free of much starch and proteids and full of fresh fruit.

I wish you could persuade Nan and Tangai to go to a public school and live down the prejudice *, i.e. if the teachers welcome the idea of their going there.

I had a birthday greeting cable from Denmark. The name of the sender was not given.

No more today.

Love from us and kisses to the children.

4-10-'32 Bapu

---

* Against children of mixed race.

102

"THE FAST WAS WELL WORTH WHILE"

Yeravda Central Prison,
(Poona)

My dear child,

I have your latest letter telling me how in ecstacy * you would have run to the telegraph office to wire to me and how you subsequently realized that that would have been wrong if only because we are poor people and all the money we had, had to be held in trust for God's service. And I had your long love-letter which you had sent to the Ashram address.

Well, the fast was well worth even for enabling A. to give up his smoke. The value lies in having given up a thing which had so possessed him. I know that many young men and young women, old men and old women were moved to such restraint and self-denial during the fast week. It shows that it was from God.

I saw and we all admired the group photo with Andrews in it. It was very good. And the bare-bodied Tangai ! She looks a perfect picture.

I expect in your next letter to see the account of your visit to the diseased sister.

I had a long letter from the Sun-field school people giving me an account of the new buildings.

You must not trifle with your body by putting into it the things that will not suit it. You cannot build your body on pulses. You do not need them at all. Your diet must consist largely of milk, eggs (since you do take them and it is well you do) and whole-meal bread and fruit and green vegetables, salads,

* At the good news of the completion of the fast.

tomatoes, spinach, marrow and the like. Even as a soldier keeps his arms clean and in order so must we keep our arms (God-given bodies) clean and in perfect order.

I have almost regained my strength and am taking normal food. M. writes regularly every week and is keeping well. Devadas is much better but is overworking himself and so is P. Mahadev of course is with me. T. is at the Ashram. He is a good young man. He is not strong in body.

Enclosed is a letter for the young friend from Denmark. Ba is at the Ashram. I think she has aged more than I have, though she is wonderfully active. Her mind gets easily tired. She worries too much.

Love to you all and in addition kisses to the children.

11-11-'32 Bapu

103

"LIFE TO BE TRUE MUST BE A CONTINUING SACRIFICE"

Superintendent,
Yeravda Central Prison,
(Poona)

My dear child,

You are not to worry over the approaching second fast. It may not come at all. But if it does come, let it be a matter of joy to you. Life to be true must be a continuing sacrifice. Enjoyment does not come after. Sacrifice is the enjoyment. All taking must be

for greater giving. This is becoming more and more clear to me. Therefore you will watch in utter calmness, joy and prayer what is happening and may happen.

I must not give you more time. Untouchability work leaves no time for love-letters.

Love to you all and kisses to the children.

Bapu

25-11-'32

104

NEW YEAR WISHES

Yeravda Central Prison,
5th January 1933

My dear child,

If I am to cope with my correspondence, side by side with untouchability work, I can only dictate letters for the most part, and even then be brief. It is a fortunate thing that I have been allowed the facility. The untouchability work was going beyond my capacity in spite of the assistance I received from V. and M. I wish I could do justice to your long love-letter. I cannot send you anything like it. I see that you have Andrews settling down in Woodbrooke. You will therefore have him always by your side, a strong support to lean on whenever you are in need.

Yes, I have seen the beautiful poem of Shelley's that you have copied for me. I hope you are keeping quite well, and I pray that the New Year has opened for you with much greater inner joy and peace than you have ever possessed.

I was glad for the letter from the ailing sister. Here is my reply to her.* Though she has given me her address, as I cannot quite make out her name, I send it through you.

Love from us both and kisses to the children to whom a separate P.C. is going.

Mahadev sent a book for Tangai and Nan for Christmas gift. I hope they got it.

Bapu

105

"THE HARIJAN"

Yeravda Central Prison,
10th February 1933

My dear child,

Yes. You did keep me without a letter this time for some weeks and I was wondering why. I must not give you a long letter this time, because the new weekly *Harijan* absorbs me to the exclusion of everything else. You will see the copy that will reach you at the same time as this.

I can quite understand what a source of pleasure Charlie's † presence must be to you and the children. His presence in your midst takes away from me too a load of anxiety on your behalf.

Love from us all to you all.

Bapu

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* A copy of this letter is given on page 123.

† C. F. Andrews.

106

"GOD'S HIDDEN WAYS"

Yeravda Central Prison,
17th February 1933

My dear child,

Nowadays my time is more than fully occupied. Two clear days have to be given to *Harijan* to the exclusion of every other work. Therefore brief as they were, my love-letters have to be briefer still. But there is some compensation in that you have my general letter in the form of *Harijan*.

I know quite well what my visit to London meant to you. We do not know God's hidden ways. If we only submit to Him, He makes us do many things even unconsciously to ourselves. It will be such a joy to me if you never find yourself in the Valley of Despair, for, to be there even for one moment means lack of faith in a living God.

I enclose herewith a letter for John Hoyland.

Mahadev is delighted to have Tangai's sweet letter.

Love,

Bapu

107

"A THOUSAND KISSES"

Yeravda Central Prison,
2nd March 1933

My dear child,

I have your letter. I am sending it to Maria. I know she will be delighted with it. Probably you wrote to her the same time that you wrote to me. Even so, the news of your joining her early will not be stale to her.

I posted a letter last week to Tangai and just gave you a line only. I hope she felt duly proud to receive a letter all to herself, put in an envelope bearing her address, and I hope that she sent me a thousand kisses when she got that letter.

As I am pouring out my heart through *Harijan*, I feel that I have nothing more to say to the members of the growing family.

Love from us all and kisses to the children.

Bapu

108

"THE CROSS MAKES A UNIVERSAL APPEAL"

Yeravda Central Prison,
24th March 1933

My dear child,

I have your long letter after some waiting. The account of your meeting is very interesting. It was impossible that with all the earnestness and force you could put into your words you could fail to be effective.

The Cross undoubtedly makes a universal appeal the moment you give it a universal meaning in place of the narrow one that is often heard at ordinary meetings. But then, as you put it, you have to have the eyes of the soul with which to contemplate it.

I am glad you are mothering the Muslim girl from Hyderabad. You must tell me more of her when you have known her more.

I never knew that people out there * ever carried loads on their heads. Is what you saw the usual practice in your part of England? What could be the

* In England.

weight, and what are the receptacles made of in which the load is carried ? What is the distance that is covered ? Is it the ordinary house-refuse that they contain ?

I hope Hans * has found an answer to his prayer.

Maria wrote to me the other day and I saw how glad she was that you were at last coming. She is weary with fatigue, both in body and mind. She is almost on the verge of breaking, and I am anxious that, whilst she is still fit, she should run away to Kashmir and give her body and mind rest for a few months. She needs it desperately.

Love from us all and kisses to the children.

Bapu

109

"GOD'S RICHEST GIFT"

Yeravda Central Prison,
7-5-1933

My dear child,

I know what you are passing through. I look upon the coming fast as the richest gift God has yet blessed me with. I must not write more. You should know that it is well whatever the result.

Love for you both and kisses for the children.

Bapu

* A German boy living with the Menons at Selly Oak.

110

"WE ARE ALL IN GOD'S HANDS"

My dear child,

I had your touching letter. Well, you have to rejoice in your suffering both mental and physical. You must now do what satisfied your own inner voice. And the end will be all right. But we are all in God's hands. Not a blade moves but by His command. If we had all our own ways, the world will go to pieces. It is perhaps as well that our wishes are often frustrated. It is the test of our loyalty to God that we believe in Him even when He refuses to fulfil our wishes. I want you therefore to enjoy perfect peace even while things seem to you to be all going wrong.

My prayer, my thoughts and my love are with you. For the rest weekly *Harijan* is my weekly letter to you as to many friends and companions.

Bapu

15-12-'33

111*

"A BASKET OF FRUIT WITH HONEY"

My dear child,

I hope Tangai is completely out of fever now. After all you could not get honey at Pondicherry. A basket of fruit with honey was sent yesterday. Miss Lester is with me now. Agatha Harrison leaves on March 2nd.

Love to you all.

20-2-'34 Bapu

* The Menons are again in India, and Gandhiji out of jail.

112

"A GRIEVANCE"

My dear child,

Two baskets were sent to you. The first one contained honey and Tamil-Hindi books I got on the way. The books might be of use there.

I hope Tangai is now quite restored.

Maria has a grievance against you. I have asked her to talk about it to you freely.

Kisses to the children and love to you all.

22-2-'34 Bapu

113

"DISCUSS THE WHOLE THING"

My dear child,

I have your letter. I am glad fruit reached you safe. Another basket was sent. Do not hesitate to ask for more when you have the need.

I don't wonder at M.'s dragging my name with your alleged breach of promise. My conscience is clear. I would not have tolerated your remaining with me, if a breach of promise to the children had been involved. But from M.'s letter I gather that her complaint against me is deeper and wider. I wish she would discuss the whole thing with you. And if she does not, you need not worry. I have written to her at length and invited her to unburden herself completely.

I leave for Poona on 9th March from Hyderabad (Deccan).

Love,

Bapu

25-2-'34

114

"SELF-DENIAL HAS TO BRING JOY"

My dear child,

I have your two letters. I am writing this at 12-15 a.m. in Motihari. Thinking it was 3 a.m. I got up and found it was 12 midnight. But I had no desire to sleep with the correspondence in front of me.

I hope the children are faring well. Yes, you will have to take them to a hill during the hot weather.

I understand what you say about the promise. Whether there was a breach or not you alone can judge. I am sorry that M. was angry over my not going there. She gave me to understand that she had caught the spirit of my self-denial. It was as much a deprivation to me as it was to her. But self-denial to be true has to bring joy not sorrow, never anger.

Love to you all.

Bapu

115

"ONE STEP ENOUGH FOR ME"

As at Patna,
31st March 1934

My dear child,

I had your long letter after keeping me waiting for a long time. There is not in your letter enough search for truth — that is, the hidden purpose of God. When we know that God Himself is the mystery of mysteries, why should anything that He does perplex us? If He acted as we would have Him do or if He acted exactly like us, we would not be His creatures and He our Creator. The impenetrable darkness that

surrounds us is not a curse but a blessing. He has given us power to see the steps in front of us and it would be enough if Heavenly Light reveals that step to us. We can then sing with Newman 'One step enough for me'. And we may be sure from our past experience that the next step will always be in view. In other words the impenetrable darkness is nothing so impenetrable as we may imagine. But it seems impenetrable when in our impatience we want to look beyond that one step. And since God is love, we can say definitely that even the physical catastrophies that he sends now and then must be a blessing in disguise and they can be so only to those who regard them as a warning for introspection and self-purification.

I understand what you say about the children. I am glad that you are in Kodaikanal with the children. Agatha Harrison is with me. It is rather a trying time for her, not being used to the Indian life. But she is standing it bravely because she wants to learn everything that she can in the shortest time possible. M. Lester I left at Patna. She was not doing well. I return to Patna on the 4th April to leave it on the 7th for Assam. I return again to Bihar about the 25th, pass about a week and then go to Orissa once more returning to Bihar. You will continue to use the Wardha address.

Love to you and kisses to the children to whom I may not write today.

Bapu

116

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

My dear child,

Though I often get up at 2 a.m. I do not overtake my correspondence. There is just time to send you a card of love on your birthday. I know I owe the box spinning wheel to the children. My love and kisses to them. Mira felt the impulse all of a sudden and went.

Love,

Bapu

30-4-'34

117

"COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS"

Wardha,
6th September 1934

My dear child,

I held up your letter all these days in the hope of being able to send the answer myself. But I must deny myself that pleasure and dictate this letter if I am to overtake the arrears.

If proofs were needed God is proving for me His greatness and goodness everyday. You remember the hymn "Count your many blessings". I think it is in Moody and Sankey's Hymn Book. I can't even count the blessings, they are so many. For, even the so-called sorrows and pains He sends descend like blessings. If we knew His love, we should know that He has nothing but blessings, and never curses, for His creation.

I hope Tangai is quite free and both the children are flourishing. You must have now received the spinning wheel.

I am flourishing. My weight has gone up from 94 to 101 lbs. I am going through a fair amount of work and taking regular exercise.

Mira is doing good work in London. She expects to be back in October. Andrews was here for over a week and he has now gone to Simla. He will come once more to Wardha before sailing, most probably on the 6th October, for London. He was looking quite well. He has brought a Welsh blacksmith with him from South Africa. Mr. Jones, that is his name, has recently joined the Oxford movement and considers himself a changed man. We all liked him very much. When Andrews goes to England, he will go back to South Africa.

P. and M. are here. Ba has gone with Ramdas to Sabarmati where Ramdas is to have rest and cure for his ailment. D. was here for a few days. He left yesterday for Bombay. He is likely to come back for the Working Committee meeting on the 8th. This, you will admit, is a fair family budget of news. You must write more regularly than you have hitherto done. I don't expect to move from Wardha yet for some time.

With love to you all,

Bapu

118

"THE WEATHER IS SUPERB"

Wardha,
23rd September 1934

My dear child,

I have your letter and now letters from children. I am glad that they like the place. Of course you cannot give another name to your bungalow, and the expression "Vision Bungalow" is quite good and significant.

Andrews was here a week ago and he would be back on Tuesday from Shantiniketan. Mira expects to be in Bombay just in time for the Congress session.

Ramdas had fever and general debility. He is now better.

I understand that the spinning wheel was sent and I hope that it has now come to you. I would like to know the progress made upon it.

How nice it would be to have you here at this time! The weather is superb — very cold, not too much sunshine and yet enough of it.

With love to you all and kisses to children,

Bapu

119

FAMILY NEWS

Wardha,
14th November 1934

My dear child,

I have your letter. I am glad Nan is restored and no more wants to go to Denmark. Of course, there is no place for any child better than the mother's lap. But that is an ideal state which we may all strive after though we may ever fail to reach it.

I am sorry to hear about Maria. Who can replace her in her school except you? And just now you are out of the question. I wish a way out was found to enable her to go to Denmark and get the change she so badly needs.

I do not remember having received your letter on the Temple Entry Bill. Was it sent after my returning to Wardha? If you can reproduce the argument please do so and I shall endeavour to reply.

I did hear about the death of Jack Hoyland's son. Andrews was then here. We sent a joint cable of condolence, and I had a full account of the death from Hoyland. It was a sad thing.

Mira returns on the 22nd bringing with her K. S.'s daughter who was having her education in London. Mary Barr is here from her village home and has brought a friend just arrived from England. Mary has taken wonderfully to the Ashram life. The weather here just now is superb. Ramdas returned with Ba four or five days ago. He is very weak, but I think he will pick up strength here. Andrews is likely to be here in December, for a fortnight or so.

Love to you all.

Bapu

120

"HARIJAN TEMPLE ENTRY"

My dear child,

If this letter can intensify the wishes, then this is to reciprocate your wishes. It is freezingly cold here. The 4 o'clock prayer bell has gone.

Of course, Harijans need ever so much more than mere temple entry for their spiritual satisfaction. Temple entry is not so much their spiritual need, as its grant is that of the arrogant caste Hindus. They can have no spiritual grace, so long as they deny to their fellows in faith the same right of worship that they claim for themselves. Is not this quite clear?

With love and kisses added for the children,

Yours,

Bapu

In Delhi till 20th at least, 28th at the most. Then Wardha.

121

" RESIGNATION "

Delhi,
17th January 1935

My dear child,

I have your letter and the children's. Tangai is a wise girl and so she has learnt to resign herself to the sorrows that come to her.* The spirit of resignation is bad when the sorrows come out of our conscious errors; but when they come for reasons we do not know and cannot know, resignation is the proper thing. In other words, constant endeavour and surrender to the will of God have to go hand in hand.

Your description of your visit to Porto Novo and Maria's losing herself in her work is very good.

My feet won't let me walk, because immediately I try, the crack re-opens.

C. F. A. could not write to you as he had no time whatsoever. It was touch and go whether he would be able to catch the steamer he did.

Both A. I. S. A. and A. I. V. I. A. are absolutely non-political associations.

You must come to Wardha some day. Delhi is too far for you. We leave here, at the latest, on the 28th instant. We have been passing through a very severe spell of cold weather.

Love, Bapu

---

* Tangai was a very delicate child at this time, with frequent ailments.

122

"TO LOVE INDIA"

My dear child,

Your letter. Why apologize for the length of your letter ? You do not write too often.

Mrs. S. was here for a day. She is a good, well-meaning woman. She told me she was with you.

Yes, the children have to be in Kodai for their health's sake. So Maria cannot go home ! It is no easy work to love India with all one's heart.

Send my love to N. when you write to her.

C. F. Andrews is in S. A. He expects to come to India in April.

Mira had a very narrow escape in a motor car accident. She is all right now.

Love from us all,

Bapu

Wardha,
25-2-'35

123

"HIS MERCY AND HIS HEALING POWER"

My dear child,

I have just finished reading your precious letter My heart was weeping as I was reading it. Do you know this Tamil proverb — " Thikkatravanukku theivamy thunai " ? It means God is the help of the helpless. He will help you and comfort you. You must not lose faith in His mercy and His healing power.

You should have written to me much earlier than you have done. But better late than never.

Of course I should love to have you and the children by my side. But they won't stand the climate and probably the surroundings also. Do not hesitate to write to me as often as you need. I am well enough to attend to your letters.

Whatever the ultimate issue, you must not be anxious about anything. Remember that God takes the burden of all our cares on His broad shoulders, if we will but let Him. This is as true as it is true that I am writing to you. Only His way is not our way, His shoulders are not like ours. But there is all the beauty in doing His will.

Love,

Bapu

124

"GOD WILL GUIDE YOU"

My dear child,

I have your long letter. I have read it with the deepest interest. You have a tough problem in front of you. If you can, you should come to Nandi Hill to see me. I reach there on 10th May G.W. God will guide you. You must not worry. Take things as they come to you when you cannot alter them.

I am writing this from the village Segaon * where I want to settle down. Mirabai is here already. She will go to some other village, if I settle down here. I do not want any of the old co-workers with me, if I can help it.

Love,

Bapu

* Five miles from Wardha. This village is now Sevagram.

125

"WHAT WE THINK BEST"

My dear child,

You are naughty, you will write on all the sides of your letter without giving any direction as to where you began writing in all the margins. Why don't you add one more sheet? But no more of grumbling. I sent S. and K. as I thought you would like to see them.

Strange! I have a letter from Maria, this week. She shows considerable anxiety about you.

It must be torture to K. that he cannot do just what he thinks is best for want of funds. We have however to take comfort from the fact, God does not always allow us to do what we think is the best. I suppose we don't always know what is best.

Do not make the children write to me. Let them write when they are led to do so of their own free will.

I hope you have completely recovered from your illness. How I should love to see you as hale and hearty as you were when we first met. You were such a picture of health that I had thought you to be incapable of getting ill.

Love,

Bapu

Wardha,
19......'36

126

"YOUR LIFE IS NOT IN VAIN"

My dear child,

May God give you full strength to live up to your motto. 'It is no easy matter to count always loss as gain, in joy as well as pain.' I know anyway, that your life is not in vain. Of course you are right in not coming to me. You will come, when God wills it.

I hope Tangai is quite well again. Kisses to the children. See if they would write to me. Here is a little note for them.

Don't coax them to write.

Love,

Bapu

Nandi Hill,
14-5-'36

127

"YOU WILL KEEP YOUR PEACE"

My dear child,

You are being tested. Why should you have 'flu even in a cool place like Kodai? But I know you will keep your peace even in the midst of tortures and live up to your motto. You will tell me when you are free. My prayers and my love are with you.

Bapu

Nandi Hill,
18-5-'36

No. 126

My dear Child

May God give you
first strength to live
up to your motto. It
is no easy matter to count
always loss as gain,
in joy as well as pain'
I know any way that
your life is not in vain.
Of course you act
right in not coming
to me. You will come

See Letter no 126

when God wills it.

I hope Tangai is quite well again. Kisses to the children. See if they will write to me. Here is a little note for them. Don't coax them to write.

Nandi Hill

14 5/36

Love

Bapu

128
"TRUST GOD TO LEAD YOU"

Wardha,
26-3-'40

My dear child,

It seems ages when I heard from you last. Therefore it gave me joy to see your letter to Charlie who has forwarded it to me for disposal. Why have you not been writing to me? I know you are careful about my time. But I do want an occasional line from you.

The girls are the biggest problem for you. But there too you have to trust God to lead you. No use fretting about things we cannot mend.

How are you keeping yourself?

Charlie had a narrow escape. He is still bed-ridden but out of danger. I saw him often enough when I was in Calcutta. Mahadev, who has just returned from Calcutta, brings news of slow but steady progress.

For the family here I am keeping fit, Ba has a persistent cough and is weak, Mahadev is living here. The place is fairly crowded. Mary is still in the village of her choice sticking to it in spite of difficulties.

M. writes to me now and then.

Love,

Bapu

129

"TRUST GOD AND BE CHEERFUL"

My dear child,

You must trust God and be cheerful. Everything pales before the tragedy that is taking place in Europe *. Can nothing be done for Tangai ?

Love,

Bapu

Wardha

* This was written after the beginning of World War II.

TO THE CHILDREN

1

"GOATS AND FLOWERS"

From Yeravda Prison

My dear Nan,

Your attempt to write a letter to me was very good. And what a reindeer you have sent! What lovely horns! I am sorry I am not playing with the goats, though they are brought before me everyday twice to be milked. I don't play because when they come, I am always doing something which I must not give up. Yes, there are a few flowers but nothing much to speak of. The ground is stony and they can't afford in prisons to lay out flowerbeds. You must write again.

Kisses to both of you.

Bapu

28-2-'32

2

"BIRDS, CATS AND KITTENS"

Dear Nan and Tangai,

You have sent me a sweet letter.

I see you are making friends with birds. We have made friends with a cat and her kittens. I call her sister. It is delightful to watch her love for her young ones. She teaches them all sorts of things by simply doing them.

God bless you.

With kisses,

Bapu

22-5-'32

3
"BIG WARS AND SMALL WARS"

Yeravda Central Prison,
Poona

My dear little friends, Nan, Anna, Gilleon and Lydia, *

I was delighted to have your sweet notes with funny drawings made by you. You do not mind my sending one note for all of you. After all you are all one in mind though not in body. Yes, it is little children like you who will stop all war. This means that you never quarrel with other boys and girls or among yourselves. You can't stop big wars, if you carry on little wars yourselves.

How I wish I was with you to celebrate Nan's and Anna's birthday. May God bless them and bless you all. My kisses to you all, if you will let me kiss you and Nan will pass on my love to Esther. Won't she ?

24-8-'32 Bapu

* Children whom Gandhiji had met in Selly Oak during his visit at the time of the Round Table Conference.

4
"UNCLE CHARLIE'S BAD HABITS"

Yeravda Central Prison,
23rd February 1933

My dear Tangai,

You have sent me a note not written by you. Therefore you cannot complain if I send you a reply not written by me.*

I know that Uncle Charlie eats much salt, but you must not copy bad habits of elderly people, and eating much salt is a bad habit, and much salt spoils the original flavour of things with which it is mixed.

Uncle Charlie has also a habit of spoiling little children by giving them too many sweets. Therefore, if I were you, I should distribute sweets amongst lots of poorer children and I should feel happy at the thought of sharing with them gifts received from friends.

Love and kisses from us both.

Bapu

My dear child,

Having dictated this letter, it has got to go to Tangai, though it is going to cost 2½ annas to the Harijan cause. Let us hope that both Nan and Tangai will make up for the loss a thousandfold and more.

Love,

Bapu

---

* A typed letter.

5

"I HOPE YOU BOTH ARE HAPPY"

Dear Nan and Tangai,

Love and kisses to you. I hope the climate * is suiting you and that you are both happy. Are you picking up Malayali tongue? You would write to me frequently.

Love,

Bapu

15-1-'34

6

HEALTH HINTS

My dear Tangai,

I hope you are quite well. Never wander in the hot sun. Eat plenty of fruit and avoid starchy things.

Love and kisses,

Bapu

25-2-'34

7

"THE GOLD RULE"

My dear Nan,

I have your very good letter. I am glad you are spinning everyday. You know the gold rule, whatever you do, do well and with your whole heart in it.

Love and kisses,

Bapu

25-2-'34

---

* Of Kodaikanal in the Palni Hills, South India.

8

"THE NEW SPINNING WHEEL"

Delhi,
17th January 1935

My dear Nan,

You have written a very good letter in good steady hand. You were quite right in wishing me a happy year because you wrote your letter on the 27th December. But there is no use now in my returning the wish, for the New Year is well on its way.

You must tell me how you felt when you began your spinning on the new wheel. Do you know how to spin on the *takli* ?

Love and kisses,

Bapu

9

A DOCTOR'S DAUGHTER

Delhi,
17th January 1935

My dear Tangai,

You are a very brave girl cheerfully going through the illnesses you get from time to time. You must ask Daddy this question : " Why do I get these sores when you are yourself a doctor ? You should find a way of helping me." I hope you are much better now.

Love and kisses,

Bapu

10

"GROWN IN YEARS AND WISDOM"

Dear children,

Do you remember that there was a time when you used to write to me? Should you not now that you have grown in years and wisdom? I was sorry to hear of Tangai's illness. The hat for delicate children like you is a necessary article of wear.

Love and kisses from Bapu.

Nandi Hill,
14-5-'36

Esther will tell you all about where I am at present.

11

"I CAN NEVER FORGET YOU"

My dear Nan,

I had hoped to send you a long chatty letter but I never got the time. Now Esther sends me a reminder. So here is this note to tell you that though I cannot write, I can never forget you. I hope both of you are happier than before.

Love and kisses to both of you.

Bapu

Segaon,
26-6-'36

12

"MAY YOUR FAITH INCREASE"

[This is the letter to the invalid girl in Birmingham, mentioned in letters 94, 97, and 99.]

Yeravda Central Prison,
5th January 1933

My dear daughter,

I was very pleased to get your letter. You are quite right in addressing me as you have done. I enjoy the happiness of having thousands of daughters. You are a welcome addition to the ever-growing family ; and since I, a puny mortal, cannot cope with such a large family, I entrust you all to the safe keeping of the All-powerful and Eternal Father, and so I never feel the burden of having the large family ; on the contrary, only the joy of possessing the trust remains.

I see that though you are an invalid, you have a strong faith and a great heart. May your faith increase with the progress of years and may you ever find peace in the midst of pain and sorrow.

Yes, I knew when I was fasting I had the prayers of many pure souls like yourself, and that knowledge sustained me greatly.

With love,

Yours,
Bapu
(M. K. Gandhi)